Election for Beadle.

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SKETCHES BY BOZ:

ILLUSTRATIVE OF EVERY-DAY LIFE,
AND EVERY-DAY PEOPLE.

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
JOHN MACRONE, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.
MDCCCXXXVI.

THOMAS CURSON HANSARD, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

PREFACE.

THE Second Edition of a work, while it affords its author an opportunity of returning his warmest thanks to the Public, for their favourable reception of the first impression, furnishes in itself the best of all possible apologies for his again intruding upon their notice, with a few words in his individual capacity.

The words which the author feels it necessary to say, in the present instance, are few indeed. He has to vindicate himself from no censure—to notice no illiberality—to complain of no attack. He has only in one single sentence, to acknowledge, with feelings

of the deepest gratitude, the kindness and indulgence with which these volumes have been universally received, and the unlooked-for success with which his efforts have been crowned.

If the pen that designed these little outlines, should present its labours to the Public frequently hereafter; if it should produce fresh sketches, and even connected works of fiction of a higher grade, they have only themselves to blame. They have encouraged a young and unknown writer, by their patronage and approval, they have stimulated him to fresh efforts, by their liberality and praise; and if they *will* be guilty of such actions, they must be content to bear the consequences which naturally result from them.

Furnival's Inn,
1*st. August*, 1836.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

In humble imitation of a prudent course, universally adopted by aeronauts, the Author of these volumes throws them up as his pilot balloon, trusting it may catch some favourable current, and devoutly and earnestly hoping it may *go off well*—a sentiment in which his Publisher cordially concurs.

Unlike the generality of pilot balloons which carry no car, in this oneit is very possible for a man to embark, not only himself, but all his hopes of future fame, and all his chances of future success. Entertaining no inconsiderable feeling of trepidation, at the idea of making so perilous a voyage in so frail a machine, alone and unaccompanied, the author was naturally desirous to secure the assistance and companionship of some well-known individual, who had frequently contributed to the success, though his well-earned reputation rendered it impossible for him ever to have shared the hazard, of similar undertakings. To whom, as possessing

this requisite in an eminent degree, could he apply but to GEORGE CRUIKSHANK? The application was readily heard and at once acceded to; this is their first voyage in company, but it may not be the last.

If any further excuse be wanting for adding this book to the hundreds which every season produces, the Author may be permitted to plead the very favourable reception, which several of the following sketches received on their original appearance in different periodicals. In behalf of the remainder, he can only entreat the kindness and favour of the public: his object has been to present little pictures of life and manners as they really are; and should they be approved of, he hopes to repeat his experiment with increased confidence, and on a more extensive scale.

February, 1836.

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The Parish.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEADLE—THE PARISH ENGINE—THE SCHOOLMASTER.

How much is conveyed in those two short words—"The Parish!" And with how many tales of distress and misery, of broken fortune and ruined hopes, too often of unrelieved wretchedness and successful knavery, are they associated! A poor man, with small earnings, and a large family, just manages to live on from hand to mouth, and to procure food from day to day; he has barely sufficient to satisfy the present cravings of nature, and can take no heed of the future. His taxes are in arrear, quarter day passes by, another quarter day arrives: he can procure no more quarter for

himself, and is summoned by—the parish. His goods are distrained, his children are crying with cold and hunger, and the very bed on which his sick wife is lying is dragged from beneath her. What can he do? To whom is he to apply for relief? To private charity? To benevolent individuals? Certainly not—there is his parish. There are the parish vestry, the parish infirmary, the parish surgeon, the parish officers, the parish beadle. Excellent institutions, and gentle, kind-hearted men. The woman dies—she is buried by the parish. The children have no protector—they are taken care of by the parish. The man first neglects, and afterwards cannot obtain, work—he is relieved by the parish; and when distress and drunkenness have done their work upon him, he is maintained a harmless babbling idiot in the parish asylum.

The parish beadle is one of the most, perhaps *the* most, important member of the local administration. He is not so well off as the churchwardens certainly, nor is he as learned as the vestry-clerk, nor does he order things quite so much his own way as either of them. But his power is very great, notwithstanding; and the dignity of his office is never impaired by the ab-

sence of efforts on his part, to maintain it. The beadle of our parish is a splendid fellow. It's quite delightful to hear him, as he explains the state of the existing poor laws to the deaf old women in the board-room-passage on business nights; and to hear what he said to the senior churchwarden, and what the senior churchwarden said to him; and what "we" (the beadle and the other Gentlemen) came to the determination of doing. A miserable looking woman is called into the board-room, and represents a case of extreme destitution, affecting herself—a widow with six small children. "Where do you live?" inquires one of the overseers. "I rents a two-pair back, gentlemen, at Mrs. Brown's, Number3, Little KingWilliam's-alley, which has lived there this fifteen year, and knows me to be very hardworking and industrious, and when my poor husband was alive, gentlemen, as died in the hospital"—"Well, well," interrupts the overseer, taking a note of the address, "I'll send Simmons, the beadle, to-morrow morning to ascertain whether your story is correct; and if so, I suppose you must have an order into the House—Simmons, go to this woman's the first thing to-morrow

morning, will you?" Simmons bows assent, and ushers the woman out. Her previous admiration of "the board" (who all sit behind great books, and with their hats on) fades into nothing before her respect for her lace-trimmed conductor; and her account of what has passed inside, increases—if that be possible—the marks of respect, shown by the assembled crowd, to that solemn functionary. As to taking out a summons, it's quite a hopeless case if Simmons attends it on behalf of the parish. He knows all the titles of the Lord Mayor by heart; states the case without a single stammer, and it is even reported that on one occasion he ventured to make a joke, which the Lord Mayor's head footman (who happened to be present) afterwards told an intimate friend, confidentially, was almost equal to one of Mr. Hobler's.

See him again on Sunday in his state-coat and cocked-hat, with a large-headed staff for show in his left hand, and a small cane for use in his right. How pompously he marshals the children into their places, and how demurely the little urchins look at him askance as he surveys them when they are all seated, with a glare of the eye, peculiar to beadles. The churchwardens

and overseers being duly installed in their curtained pews, he seats himself on a mahogany bracket, erected expressly for him at the top of the aisle, and divides his attention between his prayer-book and the boys. Suddenly, just at the commencement of the communion service, when the whole congregation is hushed into a profound silence, broken only by the deep voice of the officiating clergyman, a penny is heard to ring on the stone floor of the aisle with astounding clearness. Observe the generalship of the beadle. His involuntary look of horror is instantly changed into one of perfect indifference, as if he were the only person present who had not heard the noise. The artifice succeeds. After putting forth his right leg now and then, as a feeler, the victim who dropped the money ventures to make one or two distinct dives after it; and the beadle, gliding softly round, salutes his little round head, when it again appears above the seat, with divers double knocks, administered with the cane before noticed, to the intense delight of three young men in an adjacent pew, who cough violently at intervals until the conclusion of the sermon.

Such are a few traits of the importance and

gravity of a parish-beadle—a gravity which has never been disturbed in any case that has come under our observation, except when the services of that particularly useful machine, a parish fire-engine, are required: then indeed all is bustle. Two little boys run to the beadle as fast as their legs will carry them, and report from their own personal observation that some neighbouring chimney is on fire; the engine is hastily got out, and a plentiful supply of boys being obtained, and harnessed to it with ropes, away they rattle over the pavement, the beadle, running—we don't exaggerate—running at the side, until they arrive at some house smelling strongly of soot, at the door of which the beadle knocks with considerable gravity for half an hour. No attention being paid to these manual applications, and the turncock having turned on the water, the engine turns off amidst the shouts of the boys; it pulls up once more at the workhouse, and the beadle "pulls up" the unfortunate householder next day, for the amount of his legal reward. We never saw a parish engine at a regular fire but once. It came up in gallant style—three miles and a half an hour, at least; there was a capital supply of water,

and it was first on the spot. Bang went the pumps—the people cheered—the beadle perspired profusely; but it was unfortunately discovered, just as they were going to put the fire out, that nobody understood the process by which the engine was filled with water: and that eighteen boys, and a man, had exhausted themselves in pumping for twenty minutes, without producing the slightest effect!

The personages next in importance to the beadle, are the master of the workhouse, and the parish schoolmaster. The vestry-clerk, as every body knows, is a short, pudgy little man in black, with a thick gold watch-chain of considerable length, terminating in two large seals and a key. He is an attorney, and generally in a bustle; at no time more so, than when he is hurrying to some parochial meeting, with his gloves crumpled up in one hand, and a large red book under the other arm. As to the churchwardens and overseers, we exclude them altogether, because all we know of them, is, that they are usually respectable tradesmen, who wear hats with brims inclined to flatness, and who occasionally testify in gilt letters on a blue ground, in some conspicuous part of the church,

to the important fact of a gallery having been enlarged and beautified, or an organ rebuilt.

The master of the workhouse is not, in our parish—nor is he usually in any other—one of that class of men the better part of whose existence has passed away, and who drag out the remainder in some inferior situation, with just enough thought of the past, to feel degraded by, and discontented with, the present. We are unable to guess precisely to our own satisfaction what station the man can have occupied before; we should think he had been an inferior sort of attorney's clerk, or else the master of a national school—whatever he was, it is clear his present position is a change for the better. His income is small certainly, as the rusty black coat and threadbare velvet collar demonstrate: but then he lives free of house-rent, has a limited allowance of coals and candles, and an almost unlimited allowance of authority in his petty kingdom. He is a tall, thin, bony man; always wears shoes and black cotton stockings with his surtout; and eyes you, as you pass his parlour window, as if he wished you were a pauper, just to give you a specimen of his power. He is an admirable specimen of a small tyrant: morose, brutish,

and ill-tempered; bullying to his inferiors, cringing to his superiors, and jealous of the influence and authority of the beadle.

Our schoolmaster is just the very reverse of this amiable official. He has been one of those men one occasionally hears of, on whom misfortune seems to have set her mark; nothing he ever did, or was concerned in, appears to have prospered. A rich old relation who had brought him up, and openly announced his intention of providing for him, left him 10,000*l.* in his will, and revoked the bequest in a codicil. Thus unexpectedly reduced to the necessity of providing for himself, he procured a situation in a public office. The young clerks below him, died off as if there were a plague among them; but the old fellows over his head, for the reversion of whose places he was anxiously waiting, lived on and on, as if they were immortal. He speculated, and lost. He speculated again, and won—but never got his money. His talents were great; his disposition, easy, generous, and liberal. His friends profited by the one, and abused the other. Loss succeeded loss: misfortune crowded on misfortune; each successive day brought him nearer the verge of hopeless

penury, and the quondam friends who had been warmest in their professions, grew strangely cold and indifferent. He had children whom he loved, and a wife on whom he doated. The former turned their backs on him; the latter died broken-hearted. He went with the stream —it had ever been his failing, and he had not courage sufficient to bear up against so many shocks—he had never cared for himself, and the only being who had cared for him, in his poverty and distress, was spared to him no longer. It was at this period that he applied for parochial relief. Some kind-hearted man who had known him in happier times, chanced to be churchwarden that year and through his interest he was appointed to his present situation.

He is an old man now. Of the many who once crowded round him in all the hollow friendship of boon-companionship, some have died, some have fallen like himself, some have prospered—all have forgotten him. Time and misfortune have mercifully been permitted to impair his memory, and use has habituated him to his present condition. Meek, uncomplaining, and zealous in the discharge of his duties, he

has been allowed to hold his situation long beyond the usual period; and he will no doubt continue to hold it, until infirmity renders him incapable, or death releases him. As the grey-headed old man, feebly paces up and down the sunny side of the little court-yard between school hours, it would be difficult indeed for the most intimate of his former friends to recognise their once gay and happy associate, in the person of the Pauper Schoolmaster.

CHAPTER II.

THE CURATE—THE OLD LADY—THE CAPTAIN.

We commenced our last chapter with the beadle of our parish, because we are deeply sensible of the importance and dignity of his office. We will begin the present, with the clergyman. Our curate is a young gentleman of such prepossessing appearance, and fascinating manners, that within one month after his first appearance in the parish, half the young-lady inhabitants were melancholy with religion, and the other half, desponding with love. Never were so many young ladies seen in our parish-church on Sunday before; and never had the little round angels' faces on Mr. Tomkins's monument in the side aisle, beheld such devotion

on earth as they all exhibited. He was about five-and-twenty when he first came to astonish the parishioners. He parted his hair on the centre of his forehead in the form of a Saxon arch, wore a brilliant of the first water on the fourth finger of his left hand (which he always applied to his left cheek when he read prayers), and had a deep sepulchral voice of unusual solemnity. Innumerable were the calls made by prudent mammas on our new curate, and innumerable the invitations with which he was assailed, and which, to do him justice, he readily accepted. If his manner in the pulpit had created an impression in his favour, the sensation was increased tenfold, by his appearance in private circles. Pews in the immediate vicinity of the pulpit or reading-desk rose in valúe; sittings in the centre aisle were at a premium: an inch of room in the front row of the gallery could not be procured for love or money; and some people even went so far as to assert, that the three Miss Browns, who had an obscure family pew just behind the churchwardens', were detected one Sunday, in the free seats by the communion-table, actually lying in wait for the curate as he passed to the vestry! He be-

gan to preach extempore sermons, and even grave papas caught the infection. He got out of bed at half-past twelve o'clock one winter's night, to half-baptize a washerwoman's child in a slop-basin, and the gratitude of the parishioners knew no bounds—the very churchwardens grew generous, and insisted on the parish defraying the expense of the watch-box on wheels, which the new curate had ordered for himself, to perform the funeral service in, in wet weather. He sent three pints of gruel and a quarter of a pound of tea to a poor woman who had been brought to bed of four small children, all at once—the parish were charmed. He got up a subscription for her—the woman's fortune was made. He spoke for one hour and twenty-five minutes, at an anti-slavery meeting at the Goat and Boots—the enthusiasm was at its height. A proposal was set on foot for presenting the curate with a piece of plate, as a mark of esteem for his valuable services rendered to the parish. The list of subscriptions was filled up in no time; the contest was, not who should escape the contribution, but who should be the foremost to subscribe. A splendid silver inkstand was made, and engraved with an appropriate in-

scription; the curate was invited to a public breakfast, at the before-mentioned Goat and Boots: the inkstand was presented in a neat speech by Mr. Gubbins, the ex-churchwarden, and acknowledged by the curate in terms which drew tears into the eyes of all present—the very waiters were melted.

One would have supposed that, by this time, the theme of universal admiration was lifted to the very pinnacle of popularity. No such thing. The curate began to cough—four fits of coughing one morning between the Litany and the Epistle, and five in the afternoon service. Here was a discovery—the curate was consumptive. How interestingly melancholy! If the young ladies were energetic before, their sympathy and solicitude now knew no bounds. Such a man as the curate—such a dear—such a perfect love—to be consumptive! It was too much. Anonymous presents of black-currant jam, and lozenges, elastic waistcoats, bosom friends, and warm stockings, poured in upon the curate until he was as completely fitted out, with winter clothing, as if he were on the verge of an expedition to the North Pole: verbal bulletins of the state of his health were circulated throughout the parish half-a-dozen times a day; and

the curate was in the very zenith of his popularity.

About this period, a change came over the spirit of the parish. A very quiet, respectable, dozing old gentleman, who had officiated in our chapel of ease for twelve years previously, died one fine morning, without having given any notice whatever of his intention. This circumstance gave rise to counter-sensation the first; and the arrival of his successor occasioned counter-sensation the second. He was a pale, thin, cadaverous man, with large black eyes, and long straggling black hair: his dress was slovenly in the extreme, his manner ungainly, his doctrines startling, in short, he was in every respect the antipodes of the curate. Crowds of our female parishioners flocked to hear him: at first, because he was *so* odd-looking, then because his face was *so* expressive, then because he preached *so* well; and at last, because they really thought that, after all, there was something about him which it was quite impossible to describe. As to the curate, he was all very well; but certainly, after all, there was no denying that—that—in short the curate wasn't a novelty, and the other clergyman was. The inconstancy of public opinion is pro-

verbial: the congregation migrated one by one. The curate coughed till he was black in the face —it was in vain. He respired with difficulty— it was equally ineffectual in awakening sympathy. Seats are once again to be had in any part of our parish church, and the chapel-of-ease is going to be enlarged, as it is crowded to suffocation every Sunday!

The best known and most respected among our parishioners, is an old lady, who resided in our parish long before our name was registered in the list of baptisms. Our parish is a suburban one, and the old lady lives in a neat row of houses in the most airy and pleasant part of it. The house is her own, and it, and every thing about it, except the old lady herself, who looks a little older than she did ten years ago, is in just the same state as when the old gentleman was living. The little front parlour, which is the old lady's ordinary sitting-room, is a perfect picture of quiet neatness: the carpet is covered with brown Holland, the glass and picture-frames are carefully enveloped in yellow muslin; the table-covers are never taken off, except when the leaves are turpentined and bees'waxed, an operation which is regularly commenced every other morning at

half-past nine o'clock—and the little nicnacs are always arranged in precisely the same manner. The greater part of these are presents from little girls whose parents live in the same row; but some of them, such as the two old fashioned watches (which never keep the same time, one being always a quarter of an hour too slow, and the other a quarter of an hour too fast), the little picture of the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold as they appeared in the Royal Box at Drury-lane Theatre, and others of the same class, have been in the old lady's possession for many years. Here the old lady sits with her spectacles on, busily engaged in needlework—near the window in summer time; and if she sees you coming up the steps, and you happen to be a favourite, she trots out to open the street door for you before you knock, and as you must be fatigued after that hot walk, insists on your swallowing two glasses of sherry before you exert yourself by talking. If you call in the evening, you will find her cheerful, but rather more serious than usual, with an open Bible on the table before her, of which "Sarah," who is just as neat and methodical as her mistress, regularly reads two or three chapters in the parlour aloud.

The old lady sees scarcely any company, except the little girls before noticed, each of whom has always a regular fixed day for a periodical tea-drinking with her, to which the child looks forward as the greatest treat of its existence. She seldom visits at a greater distance than the next door but one, on either side; and when she drinks tea here, Sarah runs out first and knocks a double-knock, to prevent the possibility of her "Missis's" catching cold by having to wait at the door. She is very scrupulous in returning these little invitations, and when she asks Mr. and Mrs. so-and-so, to meet Mr. and Mrs. Somebody-else, Sarah and she dust the urn, and the best china tea service, and the Pope Joan board; and the visitors are received in the drawing-room in great state. She has but few relations, and they are scattered about in different parts of the country, and she seldom sees them. She has a son in India, whom she always describes to you as a fine, handsome fellow—so like the profile of his poor dear father over the sideboard, but the old lady adds, with a mournful shake of the head, that he's always been one of her greatest trials, and that indeed he once almost broke her heart; but it pleased God to enable her to get

the better of it, and she'd prefer your never mentioning the subject to her again. She has a great number of pensioners : and on Saturday, after she comes back from market, there is a regular levee of old men and women in the passage, waiting for their weekly gratuity. Her name always heads the list of any benevolent subscriptions, and hers are always the most liberal donations to the Winter Coal and Soup Distribution Society. She subscribed twenty pounds towards the erection of an organ in our parish church, and was so overcome the first Sunday the children sang to it, that she was obliged to be carried out by the pew-opener. Her entrance into church on Sunday is always the signal for a little bustle in the side aisle, occasioned by a general rise among the poor people, who bow and curtsy until the pew-opener has ushered the old lady into her accustomed seat, dropped a respectful curtsy, and shut the door : and the same ceremony is repeated on her leaving church, when she walks home with the family next door but one, and talks about the sermon all the way, invariably opening the conversation by asking the youngest boy where the text was.

Thus, with the annual variation of a trip to some quiet place on the sea-coast, passes the old lady's life. It has rolled on in the same unvarying and benevolent course for many years now, and must at no distant period be brought to its final close. She looks forward to its termination, with calmness, and without apprehension. She has every thing to hope, and nothing to fear.

A very different personage, but one who has rendered himself very conspicuous in our parish, is one of the old lady's next door neighbours. He is an old naval officer on half-pay, and his bluff and unceremonious behaviour, disturbs the old lady's domestic economy, not a little. In the first place he *will* smoke cigars in the front court, and when he wants something to drink with them—which is by no means an uncommon circumstance—he lifts up the old lady's knocker with his walking-stick, and demands to have a glass of table ale, handed over the rails. In addition to this cool proceeding, he is a bit of a Jack of all trades, or to use his own words, "A regular Robinson Crusoe;" and nothing delights him better, than to experimentalize on the old lady's property. One morning he got up

early, and planted three or four roots of full-blown marigolds in every bed of her front garden, to the inconceivable astonishment of the old lady, who actually thought when she got up and looked out of the window, that it was some strange eruption which had come out in the night. Another time he took to pieces the eight-day clock on the front landing, under pretence of cleaning the works, which he put together again, by some undiscovered process in so wonderful a manner, that the large hand has done nothing but trip up the little one ever since. Then he took to breeding silkworms, which he *would* bring in two or three times a day, in little paper boxes, to show the old lady, generally dropping a worm or two at every visit. The consequence was, that one morning a very stout silkworm was discovered in the act of walking up stairs—probably with the view of enquiring after his friends, for, on further inspection, it appeared that some of his companions had already found their way to every room in the house. The old lady went to the sea-side in despair, and during her absence he completely effaced the name from her brass door-plate, in his attempts to polish it with aqua fortis.

But all this is nothing to his seditious conduct in public life. He attends every vestry meeting that is held; always opposes the constituted authorities of the parish, denounces the profligacy of the churchwardens, contests legal points against the vestry-clerk, *will* make the tax-gatherer call for his money till he won't call any longer, and then he sends it: finds fault with the sermon every Sunday, says that the organist ought to be ashamed of himself, offers to back himself for any amount to sing the psalms better than all the children put together, male and female; and, in short, conducts himself in the most turbulent and uproarious manner. The worst of it is, that having a high regard for the old lady, he wants to make her a convert to his views, and therefore walks into her little parlour with his newspaper in his hand, and talks violent politics by the hour. He is a charitable, open-hearted old fellow at bottom, after all; so, although he puts the old lady a little out occasionally, they agree very well in the main, and she laughs as much at each feat of his handywork, when it's all over, as any body else.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOUR SISTERS.

The row of houses in which the old lady and her troublesome neighbour reside, comprises, beyond all doubt, a greater number of characters within its circumscribed limits, than all the rest of our parish put together. As we cannot, consistently with our present plan, however, extend the number of our parochial sketches beyond six, it will be better perhaps to select the most peculiar, and to introduce them at once without further preface.

The four Miss Willises, then, settled in our parish thirteen years ago. It is a melancholy reflection that the old adage, "time and tide wait for no man," applies with equal force to the fairer portion of the creation; and willingly

would we conceal the fact, that even thirteen years ago, the Miss Willises were far from juvenile. Our duty as faithful parochial chroniclers, however, is paramount to every other consideration, and we are bound to state, that thirteen years since, the authorities in matrimonial cases considered the youngest Miss Willis in a very precarious state, while the eldest sister was positively given over as being far beyond all human hope. Well, the Miss Willises took a lease of the house; it was fresh painted and papered from top to bottom: the paint inside was all wainscoted, the marble all cleaned, the old grates taken down, and register-stoves, you could see to dress in, put up; four trees were planted in the back garden, several small baskets of gravel sprinkled over the front one, vans of elegant furniture arrived, spring blinds were fitted to the windows, carpenters who had been employed in the various preparations, alterations, and repairs, made confidential statements to the different maid-servants in the row, relative to the magnificent scale on which the Miss Willises were commencing; the maid-servants told their "Missises," the Missises told their friends, and vague rumours were cir-

culated throughout the parish, that No. 25, in Gordon-place, had been taken by four maiden ladies of immense property.

At last the Miss Willises moved in; and then the "calling" began. The house was the perfection of neatness—so were the four Miss Willises. Every thing was formal, stiff, and cold—so were the four Miss Willises. Not a single chair of the whole set was ever seen out of its place—not a single Miss Willis of the whole four was ever seen out of hers. There they always sat, in the same places, doing precisely the same things at the same hour. The eldest Miss Willis used to knit, the second to draw, the two others to play duets on the piano. They seemed to have no separate existence, but to have made up their minds just to winter through life together. They were three long graces in drapery, with the addition—like a school-dinner—of another long grace afterwards—the three fates with another sister—the Siamese twins multiplied by two. The eldest Miss Willis grew bilious—the four Miss Willises grew bilious immediately. The eldest Miss Willis grew ill-tempered and religious—the four Miss Willises were ill-tempered and religious di-

rectly. Whatever the eldest did the others did, and whatever any body else did, they all disapproved of; and thus they vegetated—living in Polar harmony among themselves, and, as they sometimes went out, or saw company "in a quiet-way" at home, occasionally iceing the neighbours. Three years passed over in this way, when an unlooked-for and extraordinary phenomenon occurred. The Miss Willises showed symptoms of summer, the frost gradually broke up; a complete thaw took place. Was it possible? one of the four Miss Willises was going to be married!

Now, where on earth the husband came from, by what feelings the poor man could have been actuated, or by what process of reasoning the four Miss Willises succeeded in persuading themselves that it was possible for a man to marry one of them, without marrying them all, are questions too profound for us to resolve: certain it is, however, that the visits of Mr. Robinson (a gentleman in a public office, with a good salary and a little property of his own beside) were received—that the four Miss Willises were courted in due form by the said Mr. Robinson—that the neighbours were

perfectly frantic in their anxiety to discover which of the four Miss Willises was the fortunate fair, and that the difficulty they experienced in solving the problem was not at all lessened by the announcement of the eldest Miss Willis —"*We* are going to marry Mr. Robinson."

It was very extraordinary. They were so completely identified, the one with the other, that the curiosity of the whole row—even of the old lady herself—was roused almost beyond endurance. The subject was discussed at every little card-table and tea-drinking. The old gentleman of silk-worm notoriety, did'nt hesitate to express his decided opinion that Mr. Robinson was of Eastern descent, and contemplated marrying the whole family at once; and the row, generally, shook their heads with considerable gravity, and declared the business to be very mysterious. They hoped it might all end well;—it certainly had a very singular appearance, but still it would be uncharitable to express any opinion without good grounds to go upon, and certainly the Miss Willises were *quite* old enough to judge for themselves, and to be sure people ought to know their own business best, and so forth.

At last, one fine morning, at a quarter before eight o'clock, A.M., two glass-coaches drove up to the Miss Willises' door, at which Mr. Robinson had arrived in a cab ten minutes before, dressed in a light blue coat and double-milled kersey pantaloons, white neckerchief, pumps, and dress gloves, his manner denoting, as appeared from the evidence of the housemaid at No. 23, who was sweeping the door-steps at the time, a considerable degree of nervous excitement. It was also hastily reported on the same testimony, that the cook, who opened the door, wore a large white bow of unusual dimensions, in a much smarter head-dress than the regulation cap to which the Miss Willises invariably restricted the somewhat excursive taste of female servants in general.

The intelligence spread rapidly from house to house. It was quite clear that the eventful morning had at length arrived; the whole row stationed themselves behind their first and second floor blinds, and waited the result in breathless expectation.

At last the Miss Willises' door opened; the door of the first glass-coach did the same. Two gentlemen, and a pair of ladies to correspond—

friends of the family no doubt; up went the steps, bang went the door, off went the first glass-coach, and up came the second.

The street-door opened again; the excitement of the whole row increased—Mr. Robinson and the eldest Miss Willis. "I thought so," said the lady at No. 19; "I always said it was *Miss* Willis!"—"Well, I never!" ejaculated the young lady at No. 18 to the young lady at No. 17—"Did you ever, dear!" responded the young lady at No. 17 to the young lady at No. 18. "It's too ridiculous!" exclaimed a spinster of an *un*certain age, at No. 16, joining in the conversation. But who shall portray the astonishment of Gordon-place, when Mr. Robinson handed in *all* the Miss Willises, one after the other, and then squeezed himself into an acute angle of the glass-coach, which forthwith proceeded at a brisk pace, after the other glass-coach, which other glass-coach had itself proceeded at a brisk pace, in the direction of the parish church. Who shall depict the perplexity of the clergyman, when *all* the Miss Willises knelt down at the communion-table, and repeated the responses incidental to the marriage service in an

audible voice—or who shall describe the confusion which prevailed, when—even after the difficulties thus occasioned had been adjusted—*all* the Miss Willises went into hysterics at the conclusion of the ceremony, until the sacred edifice resounded with their united wailings!

As the four sisters and Mr. Robinson continued to occupy the same house after this memorable occasion, and as the married sister, whoever she was, never appeared in public without the other three, we are not quite clear that the neighbours ever would have discovered the real Mrs. Robinson, but for a circumstance of the most gratifying description, which *will* happen occasionally in the best-regulated families. Three quarter-days elapsed, and the row, on whom a new light appeared to have been bursting for some time, began to speak with a sort of implied confidence on the subject, and to wonder how Mrs. Robinson—the youngest Miss Willis that was—got on; and servants might be seen running up the steps, about nine or ten o'clock every morning, with "Missis's compliments, and wishes to know how Mrs. Robinson finds herself this morning?" And the answer always was, "Mrs. Robinson's compliments, and

she's in very good spirits, and doesn't find herself any worse." The piano was heard no longer— the knitting-needles were laid aside— drawing was neglected—and mantua-making and millinery, on the smallest scale imaginable, appeared to have become the favourite amusement of the whole family. The parlour wasn't quite as tidy as it used to be, and if you called in the morning, you would see lying on a table, with an old newspaper carelessly thrown over them, two or three particularly small caps— rather larger than if they had been made for a moderate-sized doll, with a small piece of lace, in the shape of a horse-shoe, let in behind: or perhaps a white robe, not very large in circumference, but very much out of proportion in point of length, with a little tucker round the top, and a frill round the bottom; and once when we called, we saw a long white roller, with a kind of blue margin down each side, the probable use of which we were at a loss to conjecture. Then we fancied that Mr. Dawson, the surgeon, &c., who displays a large lamp with a different colour in every pane of glass, at the corner of the row, began to be knocked up at night oftener than he used to

be; and once we were very much alarmed by hearing a hackney-coach, stop at Mrs. Robinson's door, at half-past two o'clock in the morning, out of which there emerged a fat old woman, in a cloak and nightcap, with a bundle in one hand, and a pair of pattens in the other, who looked as if she had been suddenly knocked up out of bed for some very special purpose. When we got up in the morning we saw that the knocker was tied up in an old white kid glove; and we, in our innocence (we are in a state of bachelorship), wondered what on earth it all meant, until we heard the eldest Miss Willis, *in propriâ personâ*, say with great dignity, in answer to the next inquiry, "*My* compliments, and Mrs. Robinson's doing as well as can be expected, and the little girl thrives wonderfully." And then, in common with the rest of the row, our curiosity was satisfied, and we began to wonder it had never occurred to us what the matter was, before.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ELECTION FOR BEADLE.

A GREAT event has recently occurred in our parish. A contest of paramount interest has just terminated; a parochial convulsion has taken place. It has been succeeded by a glorious triumph, which the country—or at least the parish—it's all the same—will long remember. We have had an election; an election for beadle. The supporters of the old beadle system have been defeated in their stronghold, and the advocates of the great new beadle principles have achieved a proud victory.

Our parish—which, like all other parishes, is a little world of its own—has long been divided into two parties, whose contentions, slumbering for a while, have never failed to burst forth with

unabated vigour, on any occasion on which they could by possibility be renewed. Watching-rates, lighting-rates, paving-rates, sewer's-rates, church-rates, poor's-rates—all sorts of rates, have been in their turn the subjects of a grand struggle; and as to questions of patronage, the asperity and determination with which they have been contested, is scarcely credible.

The leader of the official party—the steady advocate of the churchwardens, and the unflinching supporter of the overseers—is an old gentleman who lives in our row. He owns some half-dozen houses in it, and always walks on the opposite side of the way, so that he may be able to take in a view of the whole of his property at once. He is a tall, thin, bony man, with an interrogative nose, and little restless perking eyes, which appear to have been given him for the sole purpose of peeping into other people's affairs with. He is deeply impressed with the importance of our parish business, and prides himself, not a little, on his style of addressing the parishioners in vestry assembled. His views are rather confined than extensive; his principles more narrow than liberal. He has been heard to declaim very loudly in favour of the

liberty of the press, and advocates the repeal of the stamp duty on newspapers, because the daily journals who now have a monopoly of the public, never give *verbatim* reports of vestry meetings. He would not appear egotistical for the world, but at the same time he must say, that there *are* speeches—that celebrated speech of his own, on the emoluments of the sexton, and the duties of the office, for instance—which might be communicated to the public, greatly to their improvement and advantage.

His great opponent in public life is Captain Purday, the old naval officer on half-pay, to whom we have already introduced our readers. The captain being a determined opponent of the constituted authorities, whoever they may chance to be—and our other friend being their steady supporter, with an equal disregard of their individual merits—it will readily be supposed, that occasions for their coming into direct collision are neither few nor far between. They divided the vestry fourteen times on a motion for heating the church with warm water instead of coals: and made speeches about liberty and expenditure, and prodigality and hot water, which threw the whole parish into

a state of excitement. Then the captain, when he was on the visiting committee, and his opponent overseer, brought forward certain distinct and specific charges relative to the management of the workhouse, boldly expressed his total want of confidence in the existing authorities, and moved for "a copy of the recipe by which the paupers' soup was prepared, together with any documents relating thereto." This the overseer steadily resisted; he fortified himself by precedent, appealed to the established usage, and declined to produce the papers, on the ground of the injury that would be done to the public service, if documents of a strictly private nature, passing between the master of the workhouse and the cook, were to be thus dragged to light on the motion of any individual member of the vestry. The motion was lost by a majority of two; and then the captain, who never allows himself to be defeated, moved for a committee of inquiry into the whole subject. The affair grew serious: the question was discussed at meeting after meeting, and vestry after vestry; speeches were made, attacks repudiated, personal defiances exchanged, explanations received, and the greatest excitement prevailed,

until at last, just as the question was going to be finally decided, the vestry found that somehow or other, they had become entangled in a point of form, from which it was impossible to escape with propriety. So the motion was dropped, and everybody looked extremely important, and seemed quite satisfied with the meritorious nature of the whole proceeding.

This was the state of affairs in our parish a week or two since, when Simmons, the beadle, suddenly died. The lamented deceased had over-exerted himself, a day or two previously, in conveying an aged female, highly intoxicated, to the strong room of the workhouse. The excitement thus occasioned, added to a severe cold, which this indefatigable officer had caught in his capacity of director of the parish engine, by inadvertently playing over himself instead of a fire, proved too much for a constitution already enfeebled by age; and the intelligence was conveyed to the Board one evening, that Simmons had died, and left his respects.

The breath was scarcely out of the body of the deceased functionary, when the field was filled with competitors for the vacant office, each of whom rested his claims to public support, en-

tirely on the number and extent of his family, as if the office of beadle were originally instituted as an encouragement for the propagation of the human species. "Bung for Beadle. Five small children!"—"Hopkins for Beadle. Seven small children!!"—"Timkins for Beadle. Nine small children!!!" Such were the placards in large black letters on a white ground, which were plentifully pasted on the walls, and posted in the windows of the principal shops. Timkins's success was considered certain: several mothers of families half promised their votes, and the nine small children would have run over the course, but for the production of another placard, announcing the appearance of a still more meritorious candidate. "Spruggins for beadle. Ten small children (two of them twins) and a wife!!!" There was no resisting this; ten small children would have been almost irresistible in themselves, without the twins, but the touching parenthesis about that interesting production of nature, and the still more touching allusion to Mrs. Spruggins, must ensure success. Spruggins was the favourite at once, and the appearance of his lady, as she went about to solicit votes (which encouraged confident hopes of a still

further addition to the house of Spruggins at no remote period), increased the general prepossession in his favour. The other candidates, Bung alone excepted, resigned in despair. The day of election was fixed ; and the canvass proceeded with briskness and perseverance on both sides.

The members of the vestry could not be supposed to escape the contagious excitement inseparable from the occasion. The majority of the lady inhabitants of the parish declared at once for Spruggins, and the *quondam* overseer took the same side, on the ground that men with large families always had been elected to the office, and that although he must admit, that in other respects, Spruggins was the least qualified candidate of the two, still it was an old practice, and he saw no reason why an old practice should be departed from. This was enough for the captain. He immediately sided with Bung canvassed for him personally in all directions, wrote squibs on Spruggins, and got his butcher to skewer them up on conspicuous joints in his shop-front ; frightened his neighbour, the old lady, into a palpitation of the heart, by his awful denunciations of Spruggins's party; and bounced in and out, and up and down, and backwards

and forwards, until all the sober inhabitants of the parish thought it inevitable that he must die of a brain fever, long before the election began.

The day of election arrived. It was no longer an individual struggle, but a party contest between the ins and outs. The question was, whether the withering influence of the overseers, the domination of the churchwardens, and the blighting despotism of the vestry-clerk, should be allowed to render the election of beadle a form—a nullity: whether they should impose a vestry-elected beadle on the parish, to do their bidding and forward their views, or whether the parishioners, fearlessly asserting their undoubted rights, should elect an independent beadle of their own.

The nomination was fixed to take place in the vestry, but so great was the throng of anxious spectators, that it was found necessary to adjourn to the church, where the ceremony commenced with due solemnity. The appearance of the churchwardens and overseers, and the ex-churchwardens and ex-overseers, with Spruggins in the rear, excited general attention. Spruggins was a little thin man, in rusty black, with a long

pale face, and a countenance expressive of care and fatigue, which might either be attributed to the extent of his family or the anxiety of his feelings. His opponent appeared in a cast-off coat of the captain's—a blue coat with bright buttons : white trousers, and that description of shoes familiarly known by the appellation of "high-lows." There was a serenity in the open countenance of Bung—a kind of moral dignity in his confident air—an "I wish you may get it" sort of expression in his eye—which infused animation into his supporters, and evidently dispirited his opponents.

The ex-churchwarden rose to propose Thomas Spruggins for beadle. He had known him long. He had had his eye upon him closely for years ; he had watched him with twofold vigilance for months. (A parishioner here suggested that this might be termed "taking a double sight," but the observation was drowned in loud cries of "Order!") He would repeat that he had had his eye upon him for years, and this he would say, that a more well-conducted, a more well-behaved, a more sober, a more quiet man, with a more well-regulated mind, he had never met with. A man with a larger family he had

never known (cheers). The parish required a man who could be depended on ("Hear!" from the Spruggins side, answered by ironical cheers from the Bung party). Such a man he now proposed ("No," "Yes.") He would not allude to individuals (the ex-churchwarden continued, in the celebrated negative style adopted by great speakers). He would not advert to a gentleman who had once held a high rank in the service of his majesty; he would not say, that that gentleman was no gentleman, he would not assert that that man was no man, he would not say, that he was a turbulent parishioner, he would not say, that he had grossly misbehaved himself, not only on this, but on former occasions; he would not say, that he was one of those discontented and treasonable spirits, who carried confusion and disorder wherever they went, he would not say, that he harboured in his heart envy, and hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness. No! He wished to have every thing comfortable and pleasant, and therefore, he would say—nothing about him (cheers).

The captain replied in a similar parliamentary style. He would not say, he was astonished

at the speech they had just heard; he would not say, he was disgusted (cheers). He would not retort the epithets which had been hurled against him (renewed cheering); he would not allude to men once in office, but now happily out of it, who had mismanaged the workhouse, ground the paupers, diluted the beer, slack-baked the bread, boned the meat, heightened the work, and lowered the soup (tremendous cheers). He would not ask what such men deserved (a voice, "Nothing a day, and find themselves!"). He would not say, that one burst of general indignation should drive them from the parish they polluted with their presence ("Give it him!"). He would not allude to the unfortunate man who had been proposed —he would not say, as the vestry's tool, but as Beadle. He would not advert to that individual's family; he would not say, that nine children, twins, and a wife, were very bad examples for pauper imitation (loud cheers). He would not advert in detail to the qualifications of Bung. The man stood before him, and he could not say in his presence, what he might be disposed to say of him, if he were absent. (Here Mr. Bung telegraphed to a friend near him, under

cover of his hat, by contracting his left eye, and applying his right thumb to the tip of his nose). It had been objected to Bung that he had only five children ("Hear, hear!" from the opposition). Well, he had yet to learn that the legislature had affixed any precise amount of infantine qualification to the office of beadle; but taking it for granted that an extensive family were a great requisite, he entreated them to look to facts, and compare *data*, about which there could be no mistake. Bung was 35 years of age. Spruggins—of whom he wished to speak with all possible respect—was 50. Was it not more than possible—was it not very probable—that by the time Bung attained the latter age, he might see around him a family, even exceeding in number and extent, that to which Spruggins at present laid claim (deafening cheers and waving of handkerchiefs)? The captain concluded, amidst loud applause, by calling upon the parishioners to sound the tocsin, rush to the poll, free themselves from dictation, or be slaves for ever.

On the following day the polling began, and we never have had such a bustle in our parish since we got up our famous anti-slavery petition,

which was such an important one, that the House of Commons ordered it to be printed, on the motion of the member for the district. The captain engaged two hackney-coaches and a cab for Bung's people—the cab for the drunken voters, and the two coaches for the old ladies, the greater portion of whom, owing to the captain's impetuosity, were driven up to the poll and home again, before they recovered from their flurry sufficiently to know, with any degree of clearness, what they had been doing. The opposite party wholly neglected these precautions, and the consequence was, that a great many ladies who were walking leisurely up to the church—for it was a very hot day—to vote for Spruggins, were artfully decoyed into the coaches, and voted for Bung. The captain's arguments, too, had produced considerable effect: the attempted influence of the vestry produced a greater. A threat of exclusive dealing was clearly established against the vestry-clerk —a case of heartless and profligate atrocity. It appeared that the delinquent had been in the habit of purchasing six penn'orth of muffins, weekly, from an old woman who rents a small house in the parish, and resides among the ori-

ginal settlers; on her last weekly visit, a message was conveyed to her through the medium of the cook, couched in mysterious terms, but indicating with sufficient clearness, that the vestry-clerk's appetite for muffins, in future, depended entirely on her vote on the beadleship. This was sufficient: the stream had been turning previously, and the impulse thus administered directed its final course. The Bung party ordered one shillingsworth of muffins weekly for the remainder of the old woman's natural life; the parishioners were loud in their exclamations, and the fate of Spruggins was sealed.

It was in vain that the twins were exhibited in dresses of the same pattern, and night caps to match, at the church door: the boy in Mrs. Spruggins's right arm, and the girl in her left—even Mrs. Spruggins herself failed to be an object of sympathy any longer. The majority attained by Bung on the gross poll was four hundred and twenty-eight, and the cause of the parishioners triumphed.

CHAPTER V.

THE BROKER'S MAN.

The excitement of the late election has subsided, and our parish being once again restored to a state of comparative tranquillity, we are enabled to devote our attention to those parishioners who take little share in our party contests or in the turmoil and bustle of public life. And we feel sincere pleasure in acknowledging here, that in collecting materials for this task we have been greatly assisted by Mr. Bung himself, who has imposed on us a debt of obligation which we fear we can never repay. The life of this gentleman has been one of a very chequered description: he has undergone transitions—not from grave to gay, for he never was grave—not from lively to severe, for severity forms no part

of his disposition; his fluctuations have been between poverty in the extreme, and poverty modified, or, to use his own emphatic language, "between nothing to eat and just half enough." He is not, as he forcibly remarks, "One of those fortunate men who, if they were to dive under one side of a barge stark-naked, would come up on the other with a new suit of clothes on, and a ticket for soup in the waistcoat-pocket:" neither is he one of those, whose spirit has been broken beyond redemption by misfortune and want. He is just one of the careless, good-for-nothing, happy fellows, who float cork-like on the surface, for the world to play at hockey with: knocked here and there and every where: now to the right, then to the left, again up in the air, and anon to the bottom, but always reappearing, and bounding with the stream buoyantly and merrily along. Some few months before he was prevailed upon to stand a contested election for the office of beadle, necessity attached him to the service of a broker; and on the opportunities he here acquired of ascertaining the condition of most of the poorer inhabitants of the parish, his patron, the captain, first grounded his claims to public support.

Chance threw the man in our way a short time since. We were, in the first instance, attracted by his prepossessing impudence at the election; we were not surprised, on further acquaintance, to find him a shrewd knowing fellow, with no inconsiderable power of observation, and, after conversing with him a little, were somewhat struck (as we dare say our readers have frequently been in other cases) with the power some men seem to have, not only of sympathising with, but to all appearance of understanding feelings to which they themselves are entire strangers. We had been expressing to the new functionary our surprise that he should ever have served in the capacity to which we have just adverted, when we gradually led him into one or two professional anecdotes. As we are induced to think, on reflection, that they will tell better in nearly his own words, than with any attempted embellishments of ours, we will at once entitle them

MR. BUNG'S NARRATIVE.

"It's very true, as you say, sir," Mr. Bung commenced, "that a broker's man's is not a life to be envied; and in course you know as well as

I do, though you don't say it, that people hate and scout'em because they're the ministers of wretchedness, like, to poor people. But what could I do, sir? The thing was no worse because I did it, instead of somebody else, and if putting me in possession of a house would put me in possession of three and sixpence a day, and levying a distress on another man's goods would relieve my distress and that of my family, it can't be expected but what I'd take the job and go through with it. I never liked it, God knows; I always looked out for something else, and the moment I got other work to do, I left it. If there is any thing wrong in being the agent in such matters—not the principal, mind you—I'm sure the business, to a beginner like, I was, at all events, carries its own punishment along with it. I wished again and again that the people would only blow me up, or pitch into me—that I wouldn't have minded: it's all in my way; but it's the being shut up by yourself in one room for five days, without so much as an old newspaper to look at, or any thing to see out o' the winder but the roofs and chimneys at the back of the house, or any thing to listen to, but the ticking, perhaps, of an old Dutch clock, the

sobbing of the missis, now and then, the low talking of friends in the next room, who speak in whispers, lest 'the man' should overhear them, or perhaps the occasional opening of the door, as a child peeps in to look at you, and then runs half-frightened away.—It's all this that makes you feel sneaking somehow, and ashamed of yourself; and then, if it's winter time, they just give you fire enough to make you think you'd like more, and bring in your grub as if they wished it u'd choke you—as I dare say they do, for the matter of that, most heartily. If they're very civil, they make you up a bed in the room at night, and if they don't, your master sends one in for you; but there you are, without being washed or shaved all the time, shunned by everybody, and spoken to by no one, unless some one comes in at dinner time, and asks you whether you want any more, in a tone as much as to say, 'I hope you don't,' or, in the evening, to inquire whether you wouldn't rather have a candle, after you've been sitting in the dark half the night. When I was left in this way, I used to sit, think, think, thinking, till I felt as lonesome as a kitten in a wash-house copper with the lid on; but I believe the

old broker's men, who are regularly trained to it, never think at all. I have heard some on 'em say, indeed, that they don't know how!

"I put in a good many distresses in my time (continued Mr. Bung), and in course I wasn't long in finding, that some people are not as much to be pitied as others are, and that people with good incomes, who get into difficulties, which they keep patching up day after day, and week after week, get so used to these sort of things in time, that at last they come scarcely to feel them at all. I remember the very first place I was put in possession of, was a gentleman's house in this parish here, that every body would suppose couldn't help having money if he tried. I went with old Fixem, my old master, 'bout half arter eight in the morning; rang the area-bell, servant in livery opened the door: 'Governor at home'?—'Yes, he is,' says the man; 'but he's a breakfasting just now.' 'Never mind,' says Fixem, 'just you tell him there's a gentleman here, as wants to speak to him partickler.' So the servant he opens his eyes, and stares about him all ways—looking for the gentleman as it struck me, for I don't think any body but a man as was stone-blind

would mistake Fixem for one; and as for me, I was as seedy as a cheap cowcumber. However he turns round, and goes to the breakfast-parlour, which was a little snug sort of room at the end of the passage, and Fixem (as we always did in that profession), without waiting to be announced, walks in arter him, and before the servant could get out—'Please, sir, here's a man as wants to speak to you,' looks in at the door as familiar and pleasant as may be. 'Who the devil are you, and how dare you walk into a gentleman's house without leave?' says the master, as fierce as a bull in fits. 'My name,' says Fixem, winking to the master to send the servant away, and putting the warrant into his hands folded up like a note, 'My name's Smith,' says he, 'and I called from Johnson's about that business of Thompson's' — 'Oh,' says the other, quite down on him directly, 'How *is* Thompson?' says he;' Pray sit down Mr. Smith: John, leave the room.' Out went the servant; and the gentleman and Fixem looked at one another till they couldn't look any longer, and then they varied the amusements by looking at me, who had been standing on the mat all this time. 'Hundred and fifty pounds,

I see,' said the gentleman at last. 'Hundred and fifty pounds,' said Fixem, 'besides cost of levy, sheriff's poundage, and all other incidental expenses.'—'Um,' says the gentleman, 'I shan't be able to settle this before to-morrow afternoon.' —'Very sorry; but I shall be obliged to leave my man here till then,' replies Fixem, pretending to look very miserable over it. 'That's very unfort'nate,' says the gentleman, 'for I've got a large party here to-night, and I'm ruined if those fellows of mine get an inkling of the matter—just step here, Mr. Smith, says he, after a short pause. So Fixem walks with him up to the window, and after a good deal of whispering, and a little chinking of suverins, and looking at me, he comes back and says, 'Bung, you're a handy fellow, and very honest I know. This gentleman wants an assistant to clean the plate and wait at table to-day, and if you're not particularly engaged,' says old Fixem, grinning like mad, and shoving a couple of suverins into my hand, 'he'll be very glad to avail himself of your services.' Well, I laughed, and the gentleman laughed, and we all laughed; and I went home and cleaned myself, leaving Fixem there, and when

I went back, Fixem went away, and I polished up the plate, and waited at table, and gammoned the servants, and nobody had the least idea I was in possession, though it very nearly came out after all; for one of the last gentlemen who remained, came down stairs into the hall where I was sitting pretty late at night, and putting half a crown into my hand, says, 'Here my man,' says he, 'run and get me a coach, will you?' I thought it was a do to get me out of the house, and was just going to say so, sulkily enough, when the gentleman (who was up to every thing) came running down stairs, as if he was in great anxiety. 'Bung,' says he, pretending to be in a consuming passion, 'Sir,' says I. 'Why the devil an't you looking after that plate'?—'I was just going to send him for a coach for me,' says the other gentleman. 'And I was just a going to say,' says I—'Any body else, my dear fellow,' interrupts the master of the house, pushing me down the passage to get me out of the way—'any body else; but I have put this man in possession of all the plate and valuables, and I cannot allow him on any consideration whatever, to leave the house. Bung, damn you, go and count those

forks in the breakfast-parlour instantly.' You may be sure I went laughing pretty hearty when I found it was all right. The money was paid next day, with the addition of something else for myself, and that was the best job that I (and I suspect old Fixem too) ever got in that line.

"But this is the bright side of the picture, sir, after all," resumed Mr. Bung, laying aside the knowing look, and flash air, with which he had repeated the previous anecdote—"and I'm sorry to say, its the side one sees very—very seldom, in comparison with the dark one. The civility which money will purchase, is rarely extended to those who have none; and there's a consolation even in being able to patch up one difficulty, to make way for another, to which very poor people are strangers. I was once put into a house down George's-yard—that little dirty court at the back of the gas-works; and I never shall forget the misery of them people, dear me! It was a distress for half a year's rent —two pound ten I think. There was only two rooms in the house, and as there was no passage, the lodgers up stairs always went through the room of the people of the house, as they passed

in and out, and every time they did so—which, on the average, was about four times every quarter of an hour—they blowed up quite frightful: for their things had been seized too, and included in the inventory. There was a little piece of enclosed dust in front of the house, with a cinder-path leading up to the door, and an open rain-water butt on one side. A dirty striped curtain, on a very slack string, hung in the window, and a little triangular bit of broken looking-glass rested on the sill inside. I suppose it was meant for the people's use, but their appearance was so wretched, and so miserable, that I'm certain they never could have plucked up courage to look themselves in the face a second time, if they survived the fright of doing so once. There was two or three chairs, that might have been worth, in their best days, from eightpence to a shilling a-piece; a small deal table, an old corner cupboard, with nothing in it, and one of those bedsteads which turn up half way, and leave the bottom legs sticking out for you to knock your head against, or hang your hat upon; no bed, no bedding. There was an old sack, by way of rug, before the fire-place, and four or five children were grovelling about among

the sand on the floor. The execution was only put in, to get 'em out of the house, for there was nothing to take to pay the expenses; and here I stopped for three days, though that was a mere form too: for, in course, I knew, and we all knew, they could never pay the money. In one of the chairs, by the side of the place where the fire ought to have been, was an old 'ooman—the ugliest and dirtiest I ever see—who sat rocking herself backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, without once stopping, except for an instant, now and then, to clasp together the withered hands which, with these exceptions, she kept constantly rubbing upon her knees, just raising and depressing her fingers convulsively, in time to the rocking of the chair. On the other side, sat the mother with an infant in her arms, which cried till it cried itself to sleep, and when it woke, cried till it cried itself off again. The old 'ooman's voice I never heard; she seemed completely stupified; and as to the mother's, it would have been better if she had been so too, for misery had changed her to a devil. If you had heard how she cursed the little naked children as was rolling on the floor, and seen how savagely she struck the infant

when it cried with hunger, you'd have shuddered as much as I did There they remained all the time: the children eat a morsel of bread once or twice, and I gave 'em best part of the dinners my missis brought me, but the women eat nothing: they never even laid down on the bedstead, nor was the room swept or cleaned all the time. The neighbours were all too poor themselves to take any notice of 'em, but from what I could make out from the abuse of the woman up stairs, it seemed the husband had been transported a few weeks before. When the time was up, the landlord, and old Fixem too, got rather frightened about the family, and so they made a stir about it, and had 'em taken to the workhouse. They sent the sick couch for the old 'ooman, and Simmons took the children away at night. The old 'ooman went into the infirmary, and very soon died. The children are all in the house to this day, and very comfortable they are in comparison. As to the mother, there was no taming her at all. She had been a quiet, hard-working woman, I believe, but her misery had actually drove her wild; so after she had been sent to the house of correction half-a-dozen times, for throwing ink-

stands at the overseers, blaspheming the church-wardens, and smashing every body as come near her, she burst a blood-vessel one mornin,' and died too; and a happy release it was, both for herself and the old paupers, male and female, which she used to tip over in all directions, as if they were so many skittles, and she the ball.

"Now this was bad enough," resumed Mr. Bung, taking a half-step towards the door, as if to intimate that he had nearly concluded. "This was bad enough, but there was a sort of quiet misery—if you understand what I mean by that, sir—about a lady at one house I was put into, as touched me a good deal more. It doesn't matter where it was exactly: indeed, I'd rather not say, but it was the same sort o' job. I went with Fixem in the usual way—there was a year's rent in arrear; a very small servant-girl opened the door, and three or four fine looking little children was in the front parlour we were shown into, which was very clean, but very scantily furnished, much like the children themselves. 'Bung,' says Fixem to me, in a low voice, when we were left alone for a minute, 'I know something about this here family, and my opinion is, it's no go.'

'Do you think they can't settle?' says I, quite anxiously; for I liked the looks of them children. Fixem shook his head, and was just about to reply, when the door opened, and in come a lady, as white as ever I see any one in my days, except about the eyes, which were red with crying. She walked in, as firm as I could have done; shut the door carefully after her, and sat herself down with a face as composed as if it was made of stone. 'What is the matter, gentlemen?' says she, in a surprisin' steady voice. '*Is* this an execution?'—'It is, mum,' says Fixem. The lady looked at him as steady as ever: she didn't seem to have understood him. 'It is, mum,' says Fixem again; 'this is my warrant of distress, mum,' says he, handing it over as polite as if it was a newspaper which had been bespoke arter the next Gentleman.

The lady's lip trembled as she took the printed paper. She cast her eye over it, and old Fixem began to explain the form, but I saw she wasn't reading it, plain enough, poor thing. 'Oh, my God!' says she, suddenly a-bursting out crying, letting the warrant fall, and hiding her face in her hands.

'Oh, my God! what will become of us?' The noise she made, brought in a young lady of about nineteen or twenty, who, I suppose, had been a-listening at the door: she'd got a little boy in her arms: she sat him down in the lady's lap, without speaking, and she hugged the poor little fellow to her bosom, and cried over him, till even old Fixem put on his blue spectacles to hide the two tears, that was a-trickling down, one on each side of his dirty face. 'Now, dear ma,' says the young lady, 'you know how much you have borne. For all our sakes—for pa's sake,' says she, 'don't give way to this!'—'No, no, I won't!' says the lady, gathering herself up hastily, and drying her eyes; 'I am very foolish, but I'm better now—much better.' And then she roused herself up, went with us into every room while we took the inventory, opened all the drawers of her own accord, sorted the children's little clothes to make the work easier; and, except doing everything in a strange sort of hurry, seemed as calm and composed as if nothing had happened. When we came down stairs again, she hesitated a minute or two, and at last says, 'Gentlemen,' says she, 'I am afraid I have done wrong, and perhaps it may bring

you into trouble. I secreted just now,' she says, 'the only trinket I have left in the world—here it is.' So she lays down on the table, a little miniature mounted in gold. 'It's a miniature,' she says, 'of my poor dear father! I little thought once, that I should ever thank God for depriving me of the original, but I do, and have done for years back, most fervently. Take it away, sir,' she says, 'it's a face that never turned from me in sickness or distress, and I can hardly bear to turn from it now, when, God knows, I suffer both in no ordinary degree.' I couldn't say nothing, but I raised my head from the inventory which I was filling up, and looked at Fixem: the old fellow nodded to me significantly, so I ran my pen through the '*Mini*' I had just written, and left the miniature on the table.

"Well, sir, to make short of a long story, I was left in possession, and in possession I remained; and though I was an ignorant man, and the master of the house a clever one, I saw what he never did, but what he would give worlds now (if he had 'em) to have seen in time. I saw, sir, that his wife was wasting away, beneath cares of which she never complained,

and griefs she never told. I saw that she was dying before his eyes; I knew that an exertion from him might have saved her, but he never made it. I don't blame him: I don't think he *could* rouse himself. She had so long anticipated all his wishes, and acted for him, that he was a lost man when left to himself. I used to think when I caught sight of her, in the clothes she used to wear, which looked shabby even upon her, and would have been scarcely decent on any one else, that if I was a gentleman it would wring my very heart to see the woman that was a smart and merry girl when I courted her, so altered through her love for me. Bitter cold and damp weather it was, yet though her dress was thin, and her shoes none of the best, during the whole three days, from morning to night, she was out of doors running about to try and raise the money. The money *was* raised, and the execution was paid out. The whole family crowded into the room where I was, when the money arrived. The father was quite happy as the inconvenience was removed —I dare say he didn't know how. The children looked merry and cheerful again, the eldest girl was bustling about, making preparations

for the first comfortable meal they had had since the distress was put in—and the mother looked pleased to see them all so; but if ever I saw death in a woman's face, I saw it in hers that night.

"I was right, sir," continued Mr. Bung, hurriedly passing his coat-sleeve over his face, "The family grew more prosperous, and good fortune arrived. But it was too late. Those children are motherless now, and their father would give up all he has since gained—house, home, goods, money: all that he has, or ever can have, to restore the wife he has lost."

CHAPTER VI.

THE LADIES' SOCIETIES.

Our Parish is very prolific in ladies' charitable institutions. In winter, when wet feet are common, and colds not scarce, we have the ladies' soup distribution society, the ladies' coal distribution society, and the ladies' blanket distribution society: in summer, when stone fruits flourish and stomach aches prevail, we have the ladies' dispensary, and the ladies' sick visitation committee; and all the year round we have the ladies' child's examination society, the ladies' bible and prayer-book circulation society, and the ladies' childbed-linen monthly loan society. The two latter are decidedly the most important; whether they are productive of more benefit than the rest, is not for us to say, but

we can take upon ourselves to affirm, with the utmost solemnity, that they create a greater stir and more bustle, than all the others put together.

We should be disposed to say, on the first blush of the matter, that the bible and prayer-book society is not so popular as the childbed-linen society; the bible and prayer-book society has, however, considerably increased in importance within the last year or two, having derived some adventitious aid from the factious opposition of the child's examination society, which factious opposition originated in manner following:—When the young curate was popular, and all the unmarried ladies in the parish took a serious turn, the charity children all at once became objects of peculiar and especial interest. The three Miss Browns (enthusiastic admirers of the curate) taught, and exercised, and examined, and re-examined the unfortunate children, until the boys grew pale, and the girls consumptive, with study and fatigue. The three Miss Browns stood it out very well, because they relieved each other; but the children, having no relief at all, exhibited decided symptoms of weariness and care. The unthinking part of the parishioners laughed at

all this, but the more reflective portion of the inhabitants abstained from expressing any opinion on the subject until that of the curate had been clearly ascertained.

The opportunity was not long wanting. The curate preached a charity sermon on behalf of the charity school, and in the charity sermon aforesaid, expatiated in glowing terms on the praiseworthy and indefatigable exertions of certain estimable individuals. Sobs were heard to issue from the three Miss Browns' pew; the pew-opener of the division was seen to hurry down the centre aisle to the vestry door, and to return immediately, bearing a glass of water in her hand. A low moaning ensued; two more pew-openers rushed to the spot, and the three Miss Browns, each supported by a pew-opener, were led out of the church, and led in again after a lapse of five minutes with white pocket-handkerchiefs to their eyes, as if they had been attending a funeral in the church yard adjoining. If any doubt had for a moment existed, as to whom the allusion was intended to apply, it was at once removed. The wish to enlighten the charity children became universal, and the three Miss Browns were unanimously besought to di-

vide the school into classes, and to assign each class to the superintendence of two young ladies.

A little learning is a dangerous thing, but a little patronage is more so: the three Miss Browns appointed all the old maids, and carefully excluded the young ones. Maiden aunts triumphed, mammas were reduced to the lowest depth of despair, and there is no telling in what act of violence the general indignation against the three Miss Browns might have vented itself, had not a perfectly providential occurrence changed the tide of public feeling. Mrs. Johnson Parker, the mother of seven extremely fine girls—all unmarried—hastily reported to several other mammas of several other unmarried families, that five old men, six old women, and children innumerable, in the free seats near her pew, were in the habit of coming to church every Sunday, without either bible or prayer-book. Was this to be borne in a civilized country? Could such things be tolerated in a Christian land? Never! A ladies' bible and prayer-book distribution society was instantly formed: president, Mrs. Johnson Parker, treasurers, auditors, and secretary, the Misses Johnson Parker: subscriptions were

entered into, books were bought, all the free-seat people provided therewith, and when the first lesson was given out, on the first Sunday succeeding these events, there was such a dropping of books, and rustling of leaves, that it was morally impossible to hear one word of the service for five minutes afterwards.

The three Miss Browns, and their party, saw the approaching danger, and endeavoured to avert it by ridicule and sarcasm. Neither the old men nor the old women could read their books, now they had got 'em, said the three Miss Browns. Never mind; they could learn, replied Mrs. Johnson Parker. The children couldn't read either, suggested the three Miss Browns. No matter; they could be taught, retorted Mrs. Johnson Parker. A balance of parties took place. The Miss Browns publicly examined — popular feeling inclined to the child's examination society. The Miss Johnson Parkers publicly distributed — a reaction took place in favour of the prayer-book distribution. A feather would have turned the scale, and a feather did turn it. A missionary returned from the West Indies; he was to be presented to the Dissenters' Missionary So-

ciety on his marriage with a wealthy widow. Overtures were made to the Dissenters by the Johnson Parkers. Their object was the same, and why not have a joint meeting of the two societies? The proposition was accepted. The meeting was duly heralded by public announcement, and the room was crowded to suffocation. The missionary appeared on the platform; he was hailed with enthusiasm. He repeated a dialogue he had heard between two negroes, behind a hedge, on the subject of distribution societies; the approbation was tumultuous. He gave an imitation of the two negroes in broken English; the roof was rent with applause. From that period we date (with one trifling exception) a daily increase in the popularity of the distribution society—an increase of popularity, which the feeble and impotent opposition of the examination party, has only tended to augment.

Now the great points about the childbed-linen monthly loan society, are, that it is less dependent on the fluctuations of public opinion than either the distribution or the child's examination; and that, come what may, there is never any lack of objects on which to exercise

its benevolence. Our parish is a very populous one, and, if any thing, contributes, we should be disposed to say, rather more than its due share to the aggregate amount of births in the metropolis and its environs. The consequence is, that the monthly-loan society flourishes, and invests its members with a most enviable amount of bustling patronage. The society (whose only notion of dividing time, would appear to be its allotment into months) holds monthly tea-drinkings, at which the monthly report is received, a secretary elected for the month ensuing, and such of the monthly boxes as may not happen to be out on loan for the month, carefully examined.

We were never present at one of these meetings, from all of which it is scarcely necessary to say, gentlemen are carefully excluded; but Mr. Bung has been called before the board once or twice, and we have his authority for stating, that its proceedings are conducted with great order and regularity: not more than four members being allowed to speak at one time on any pretence whatever. The regular committee is composed exclusively of married ladies, but a vast number of young unmarried

ladies of from eighteen to twenty-five years of age, respectively, are admitted as honorary members, partly because they are very useful in replenishing the boxes, and visiting the confined, partly because it is highly desirable that they should be initiated, at an early period, into the more serious and matronly duties of after-life; and partly, because prudent mammas have not unfrequently been known to turn this circumstance to wonderfully good account in matrimonial speculations.

In addition to the loan of the monthly boxes (which are always painted blue, with the name of the society in large white letters on the lid), the society dispense occasional grants of beef-tea, and a composition of warm beer, spice, eggs, and sugar, commonly known by the name of "caudle," to its patients. And here again the services of the honorary members are called into requisition, and most cheerfully conceded. Deputations of twos or threes are sent out to visit the patients, and on these occasions there is such a tasting of caudle and beef-tea, such a stirring about of little messes in tiny saucepans on the hob, such a dressing and undressing of infants, such a tying, and folding, and pinning:

such a nursing and warming of little legs and feet before the fire, such a delightful confusion of talking and cooking, bustle, importance, and officiousness, as never can be enjoyed in its full extent but on similar occasions.

In rivalry of these two institutions, and as a last expiring effort to acquire parochial popularity, the child's examination people determined the other day on having a grand public examination of the pupils; and the large schoolroom of the national seminary was, by and with the consent of the parish authorities, devoted to the purpose. Invitation circulars were forwarded to all the principal parishioners, including, of course, the heads of the other two societies, for whose especial behoof and edification the display was intended; and a large audience was confidently anticipated on the occasion. The floor was carefully scrubbed the day before, under the immediate superintendence of the three Miss Browns; forms were placed across the room for the accommodation of the visitors, specimens of writing were carefully selected, and as carefully patched and touched up, until they astonished the children who had written them, rather more than the company who read

them: sums in compound addition were rehearsed and re-rehearsed until all the children had the totals by heart; and the preparations altogether were on the most laborious and comprehensive scale. The morning arrived. The children were yellow-soaped and flannelled, and towelled, 'till their faces shone again; every pupil's hair was carefully combed into his or her eyes, as the case might be; the girls were adorned with snow-white tippets, and caps bound round the head by a single purple ribbon: the necks of the elder boys were fixed into collars of startling dimensions.

The doors were thrown open, and the Miss Browns and Co. were discovered in plain white muslin dresses, and caps of the same—the child's examination uniform. The room filled: the greetings of the company were loud and cordial. The distributionists trembled, for their popularity was at stake. The eldest boy fell forward, and delivered a propitiatory address from behind his collar. It was from the pen of Mr. Henry Brown; the applause was universal, and the Johnson Parkers were aghast. The examination proceeded with success, and terminated in

triumph. The child's examination society gained a momentary victory, and the Johnson Parkers retreated in despair.

A secret council of the distributionists was held that night—Mrs. Johnson Parker in the chair—to consider of the best means of recovering the ground they had lost in the favour of the parish. What could be done? Another meeting! Alas! who was to attend it? The Missionary would not do twice; and the slaves were emancipated. A bold step must be taken. The parish must be astonished in some way or other; but no one was able to suggest what the step should be. At length, a very old lady was heard to mumble, in indistinct tones, "Exeter Hall." A sudden light broke in upon the meeting. It was unanimously resolved that a deputation of old ladies should wait upon a celebrated oratorical pedlar, imploring his assistance, and the favour of a speech; and that the deputation should also wait on two or three other imbecile old women, not resident in the parish, and entreat their attendance. The application was successful, the meeting was held; the pedlar (an Irishman) came. He talked of green isles—other shores—vast Atlantic—

bosom of the deep—Christian charity—blood and extermination—mercy in hearts—arms in hands—altars and homes—household gods. He wiped his eyes, he blew his nose, and he quoted Latin. The effect was tremendous—the Latin was a decided hit. Nobody knew exactly what it was about, but everybody knew it must be affecting, because even the orator was overcome. The popularity of the distribution society among the ladies of our parish is unprecedented; and the child's examination is going fast to decay.

Miss Evans and the Eagle.

Mr. Samuel Wilkins was a carpenter, a journeyman carpenter, of small dimensions: decidedly below the middle size—bordering, perhaps, upon the dwarfish. His face was round and shining, and his hair was carefully twisted into the outer corner of each eye, till it formed a variety of that description of semi-curls, usually known as "haggerawators." His earnings were all-sufficient for his wants, varying from eighteen shillings to one pound five, weekly—his manner undeniable—his sabbath waistcoats dazzling. No wonder that with these endowments, Samuel Wilkins found favour in the eyes of the other sex: many women have been captivated by far less substantial qualifications. But Samuel was proof against their blandishments, until at length his eyes rested on those of a being for whom, from that time forth, he felt fate had destined him. He came, and conquered—pro-

posed, and was accepted—loved and was beloved. Mr. Wilkins "kept company" with Jemima Evans.

Miss Evans (or Ivins, to adopt the pronunciation most in vogue with her circle of acquaintance) had adopted in early life the harmless pursuit of shoe-binding, to which she had afterwards superadded the occupation of a straw-bonnet maker. Herself, her maternal parent, and two sisters, formed an harmonious quartett in the most secluded portion of Camden-town; and here it was, that Mr. Wilkins presented himself one Monday afternoon in his best attire, with his face more shining, and his waistcoat more bright, than either had ever appeared before. The family were just going to tea, and were *so* glad to see him. It was quite a little feast—two ounces of seven and sixpenny green, and a quarter of a pound of the best fresh; and Mr. Wilkins had brought a pint of shrimps, neatly folded up in a clean belcher, to give a zest to the meal, and propitiate Mrs. Ivins. Jemima was "cleaning herself" up stairs, so Mr. Samuel Wilkins sat down and talked domestic economy with Mrs. Ivins, whilst the two youngest Miss Ivinses poked bits of lighted brown paper be-

George Cruikshank

tween the bars under the kettle, to make the water boil for tea.

"I vos a thinkin," said Mr. Samuel Wilkins, during a pause in the conversation—"I vos a thinkin of taking J'mima to the Eagle to-night."—"O my!" exclaimed Mrs. Ivins. "Lor! how nice!" said the youngest Miss Ivins. "Well, I declare!" added the youngest Miss Ivins but one. "Tell Jemima to put on her white muslin, Tilly," screamed Mrs. Ivins, with motherly anxiety; and down came J'mima herself soon afterwards in a white muslin gown, carefully hooked and eyed, and little red shawl, plentifully pinned, and white straw bonnet trimmed with red ribbons, and a small necklace, and large pair of bracelets, and Denmark satin shoes, and open-worked stockings, white cotton gloves on her fingers, and a cambric pocket-handkerchief, carefully folded up, in her hand—all quite genteel and ladylike. And away went Miss Jemima Ivins, and Mr. Samuel Wilkins, and a dress cane, with a gilt knob at the top—to the admiration and envy of the street in general, and to the high gratification of Mrs. Ivins, and the two youngest Miss Ivinses in particular.

They had no sooner turned into the Pancras road, than who should Miss J'mima Ivins stumble upon, by the most fortunate accident in the world, but a young lady as she knew, with *her* young man; and it is so strange how things do turn out sometimes—they were actually a going to the Eagle too. So Mr. Samuel Wilkins was introduced to Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man, and they all walked on together, talking, and laughing, and joking away like any thing; and when they got as far as Pentonville, Miss Ivins's friend's young man, would have the ladies go into the Crown, to taste some shrub, which, after a great blushing and giggling, and hiding of faces in elaborate pocket-handkerchiefs, they consented to do. Having tasted it once, they were easily prevailed upon to taste it again; and they sat out in the garden, tasting shrub, and looking at the Busses alternately, till it was just the proper time to go to the Eagle; and then they resumed their journey, and walked on very fast, for fear they should lose the beginning of the concert in the Rotunda.

"How ev'nly!" said Miss Jemima Ivins, and Miss Jemima Ivins's friend, both at once,

when they had passed the gate and were fairly inside the gardens. There were the walks beautifully gravelled and planted, and the refreshment boxes painted and ornamented like so many snuff-boxes, and the variegated lamps shedding their rich light upon the company's heads, and the place for dancing ready chalked for the company's feet, and a Moorish band playing at one end of the gardens, and an opposition military band playing away at the other. Then the waiters were rushing to and fro with glasses of negus, and glasses of brandy-and-water, and bottles of ale, and bottles of stout; and ginger-beer was going off in one place, and practical jokes going on in another, and people were crowding to the door of the Rotunda, and in short the whole scene was, as Miss J'mima Ivins, inspired by the novelty, or the shrub, or both, observed—"one of dazzlin excitement." As to the concert-room, never was anything half so splendid. There was an orchestra for the singers, all paint, gilding, and plate glass. And such an organ! Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man, whispered it had cost "four hundred pound," which Mr. Samuel Wilkins said was "not dear neither;" an opinion in which

the ladies perfectly coincided. The audience were seated on elevated benches round the room, and crowded into every part of it, and every body was eating and drinking as comfortably as possible. Just before the concert commenced, Mr. Samuel Wilkins ordered two glasses of rum-and-water "warm with—" and two slices of lemon, for himself and the other young man, together with "a pint o' sherry wine for the ladies, and some sweet carraway-seed biscuits;" and they would have been quite comfortable and happy, only one gentleman with large whiskers *would* stare at Miss J'mima Ivins, and another gentleman in a plaid waistcoat *would* wink at Miss J'mima Ivins's friend, on which Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man exhibited symptoms of boiling over, and began to mutter about "people's imperence," and "swells out o' luck," and to intimate, in oblique terms, a vague intention of knocking somebody's head off; which he was only prevented from announcing more emphatically, by both Miss J'mima Ivins and her friend threatening to faint away on the spot if he said another word.

The concert commenced — overture on

the organ. "How solemn!" exclaimed Miss J'mima Ivins, glancing, perhaps unconsciously, at the gentleman with the whiskers. Mr. Samuel Wilkins, who had been muttering apart for some time past, as if he were holding a confidential conversation with the gilt knob of the dress cane, breathed very hard—breathing vengeance, perhaps—but said nothing. "The soldier tired," Miss Somebody in white satin. "Ancore!" cried Miss J'mima Ivins's friend. "Ancore!" shouted the gentleman in the plaid waistcoat, immediately, hammering the table with a stout-bottle. Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man, eyed the man behind the waistcoat from head to foot, and cast a look of interrogative contempt towards Mr. Samuel Wilkins. Comic song, accompanied on the organ. Miss J'mima Ivins was convulsed with laughter—so was the man with the whiskers. Every thing the ladies did, the plaid waistcoat and whiskers did, by way of expressing a unity of sentiment and congeniality of soul; and Miss J'mima Ivins, and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend, grew lively and talkative, as Mr. Samuel Wilkins, and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man, grew morose and surly in inverse proportion.

Now, if the matter had ended here, the little party might soon have recovered their former equanimity, but Mr. Samuel Wilkins, and his friend, began to throw looks of defiance upon the waistcoat and whiskers. And the waistcoat and whiskers, by way of intimating the slight degree in which they were affected by the looks aforesaid, bestowed glances of increased admiration upon Miss J'mima Ivins and friend. The concert and vaudeville concluded, they promenaded the gardens. The waistcoat and whiskers did the same, and made divers remarks, complimentary to the ankles of Miss J'mima Ivins and friend, in an audible tone. At length, not satisfied with these numerous atrocities, they actually came up, and asked Miss J'mima Ivins, and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend, to dance, without taking no more notice of Mr. Samuel Wilkins, and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man, than if they was nobody! "What do you mean by that, scoundrel?" exclaimed Mr. Samuel Wilkins, grasping the gilt-knobbed dress cane firmly in his right hand. "What the devil's the matter with *you*, you little humbug?" replied the whiskers. "How dare you insult me and

my friend ?" inquired the friend's young man. "You and your friend be d—d," responded the waistcoat. "Take that," exclaimed Mr. Samuel Wilkins. The ferrule of the gilt-knobbed dress cane was visible for an instant, and then the light of the variegated lamps shone brightly upon it, as it whirled into the air, cane and all. "Give it him," said the waistcoat. "Lullerli-e-te," shouted the whiskers. "Horfficer !" screamed the ladies. It was too late. Miss J'mima Ivins's beau, and the friend's young man, lay gasping on the gravel, and the waistcoat and whiskers were seen no more.

Miss J'mima Ivins and friend being conscious that the affray was, in no slight degree, attributable to themselves, of course went into hysterics forthwith, declared themselves the most injured of women, exclaimed in incoherent ravings, that they had been suspected—wrongfully suspected—oh ! that they should ever have lived to see the day, and so forth ; suffered a relapse every time they opened their eyes, and saw their unfortunate little admirers, and were carried to their respective abodes in a hackney-coach, and a state of insensibility, compounded of shrub, sherry, and excitement.

Shops and their Tenants.

What inexhaustible food for speculation, do the streets of London afford! We never were able to agree with Sterne in pitying the man who could travel from Dan to Beersheba, and say that all was barren; we have not the slightest commiseration for the man who can take up his hat and stick, and walk from Covent Garden to St. Paul's churchyard, and back into the bargain, without deriving some amusement—we had almost said instruction—from his perambulation. And yet there are such beings: we meet them every day. Large black stocks and light waistcoats, jet canes and discontented countenances, are the characteristics of the race; other people brush quickly by you, steadily plodding on to business, or cheerfully running after pleasure. These men linger list-

lessly past, looking as happy and animated as a policeman on duty. Nothing seems to make an impression on their minds: nothing short of being knocked down by a porter, or run over by a cab, will disturb their equanimity. You will meet them on a fine day in any of the leading thoroughfares: peep through the window of a west-end cigar-shop in the evening, if you can manage to get a glimpse between the blue curtains which intercept the vulgar gaze, and you see them in their only enjoyment of existence. There they are, lounging about, on round tubs and pipe-boxes, in all the dignity of whiskers, and gilt watch-guards; whispering soft nothings to the young lady in amber, with the large earings, who, as she sits behind the counter in a blaze of adoration and gas-light, is the admiration of all the female servants in the neighbourhood, and the envy of every milliner's apprentice within two miles round.

One of our principal amusements is to watch the gradual progress—the rise or fall—of particular shops. We have formed an intimate acquaintance with several, in different parts of town, and are perfectly acquainted with their whole history. We could name off-hand, twenty

at least, which we are quite sure have paid no taxes for the last six years. They are never inhabited for more than two months consecutively, and we verily believe have witnessed every retail trade in the directory.

There is one, whose history is a sample of the rest, in whose fate we have taken especial interest, having had the pleasure of knowing it, ever since it has been a shop. It is on the Surrey side of the water—a little distance beyond the Marsh-gate. It was, originally, a substantial, good-looking private house enough; the landlord got into difficulties, the house got into Chancery, the tenant went away, and the house went to ruin. At this period, our acquaintance with it commenced: the paint was all worn off; the windows were broken, the area was green with neglect and the overflowings of the water-butt, the butt itself was without a lid, and the street-door was the very picture of misery. The chief pastime of the children in the vicinity had been to assemble in a body on the steps, and take it in turns to knock loud double knocks at the door, to the great satisfaction of the neighbours generally, and especially of the nervous old lady next door

but one. Numerous complaints were made, and several small basins of water discharged over the offenders, but without effect. In this state of things, the marine-store dealer at the corner of the street, in the most obliging manner, took the knocker off, and sold it: and the unfortunate house looked more wretched than ever.

We deserted our friend for a few weeks. What was our surprise, on our return, to find no trace of its existence! In its place was a handsome shop, fast approaching to a state of completion, and on the shutters were large bills, informing the public that it would shortly be opened with "an extensive stock of linen-drapery and haberdashery." It opened in due course; there was the name of the proprietor "and Co.," in gilt letters, almost too dazzling to look at. Such ribbons and shawls! and two such elegant young men behind the counter, each in a clean collar and white neckcloth, like the lover in a farce. As to the proprietor, he did nothing but walk up and down the shop, and hand seats to the ladies, and hold important conversations with the handsomest of the young men, who was shrewdly suspected by the neighbours to be the "Co." We saw all this with

sorrow; we felt a fatal presentiment that the shop was doomed—and so it was. Its decay was slow, but sure. Tickets gradually appeared in the windows; then rolls of flannel, with labels on them, were stuck outside the door, then a bill was pasted on the street-door, intimating that the first floor was to let, *un*furnished, then one of the young men disappeared altogether, and the other took to a black neckerchief, and the proprietor took to drinking. The shop became dirty, broken panes of glass remained unmended, and the stock disappeared piecemeal. At last the company's man came to cut off the water, and then the linen-draper cut off himself, leaving the landlord his compliments and the key.

The next occupant was a fancy stationer. The shop was more modestly painted than before, still it was neat; but somehow we always thought, as we passed, that it looked like a poor and struggling concern. We wished the man well, but we trembled for his success. He was a widower evidently, and had employment elsewhere, for he passed us every morning on his road to the city. The business was carried on by his eldest daughter. Poor girl! she

needed no assistance. We occasionally caught a glimpse of two or three children, in mourning like herself, as they sat in the little parlour behind the shop ; and we never passed at night without seeing the eldest girl at work, either for them, or in making some elegant little trifle for sale. We often thought, as her pale face looked more sad and pensive in the dim candle-light, that if those thoughtless females who interfere with the miserable market of poor creatures such as these, knew but one half of the misery they suffer, and the bitter privations they endure, in their honourable attempts to earn a scanty subsistence, they would, perhaps, resign even opportunities for the gratification of vanity, and an immodest love of self-display, rather than drive them to a last dreadful resource, which it would shock the delicate feelings of these *charitable* ladies to hear named.

But we are forgetting the shop. Well, we continued to watch it, and every day showed too clearly, the increasing poverty of its inmates. The children were clean, it is true, but their clothes were threadbare and shabby; no tenant had been procured for the upper part of the house, from the letting of which, a portion of

the means of paying the rent was to have been derived, and a slow, wasting consumption, prevented the eldest girl from continuing her exertions. Quarter-day arrived. The landlord had suffered from the extravagance of his last tenant, and he had no compassion for the struggles of his successor; he put in an execution. As we passed one morning, the broker's men were removing the little furniture there was in the house, and a newly-posted bill informed us that it was again "To Let." What became of the last tenant we never could learn; we believe the girl is past all suffering, and beyond all sorrow. God help her! We hope she is.

We were somewhat curious to ascertain what would be the next stage—for that the place had no chance of succeeding now, was perfectly clear. The bill was soon taken down, and some alterations were being made in the interior of the shop. We were in a fever of expectation; we exhausted conjecture—we imagined all possible trades, none of which were perfectly reconcileable with our idea of the gradual decay of the tenement. It opened, and we wondered why we had not guessed at the real state of the case before. The shop- not a large one at the best

of times—had been converted into two, one was a bonnet-shape makers, the other was opened by a tobacconist, who also dealt in walking-sticks, and Sunday newspapers; the two were separated by a thin partition, covered with tawdry striped paper.

The tobacconist remained in possession longer than any tenant within our recollection. He was a red-faced, impudent, good-for-nothing dog, evidently accustomed to take things as they came, and to make the best of a bad job. He sold as many cigars as he could, and smoked the rest. He occupied his shop as long as he could make peace with the landlord, and when he could no longer live in quiet, he very coolly locked the door, and bolted himself. From this period, the two little dens have undergone innumerable changes. The tobacconist was succeeded by a theatrical hair-dresser, who ornamented the window with a great variety of "characters," and terrific combats. The bonnet-shape-maker gave place to a greengrocer, and the histrionic barber was succeeded, in his turn, by a tailor. So numerous have been the changes, that we have of late done little more than mark the peculiar but certain indications

of a house being poorly inhabited. It has been progressing by almost imperceptible degrees. The occupiers of the shops have gradually given up room after room, until they have only reserved the little parlour for themselves. First there appeared a brass-plate on the private door with "Ladies School" legibly engraved thereon; shortly afterwards we observed a second brass-plate, then a bell, and then another bell.

When we paused in front of our old friend, and observed these signs of poverty which are not to be mistaken, we thought, as we turned away, that the house had attained its lowest pitch of degradation. We were wrong. When we last passed it, a "dairy" was established in the area, and a party of melancholy-looking fowls were amusing themselves by running in at the front door, and out at the back one.

Thoughts about People.

'Tis strange with how little notice, good, bad, or indifferent, a man may live and die in London. He awakens no sympathy in the breast of any single person; his existence is a matter of interest to no one save himself, and he cannot be said to be forgotten when he dies, for no one remembered him when he was alive. There really is a very numerous class of people in this great metropolis, who seem not to possess a single friend, and whom nobody appears to care for. Urged by imperative necessity in the first instance, they have resorted to London in search of employment, and the means of subsistence. It is hard, we know, to break the ties which bind us to our homes and friends, and harder still to efface the thousand recollections of happy days and old times, which have been slumbering in our bosoms for years, and only rush upon the

mind, to bring before it with startling reality, associations connected with the friends we have left, the scenes we have beheld, too probably for the last time, and the hopes we once cherished, but may entertain no more. These men, however, happily for themselves, have long since forgotten such thoughts: old country friends have died or emigrated, former correspondents have become lost, like themselves, in the crowd and turmoil of some busy city, and they have gradually settled down into mere passive creatures of habit and endurance.

We were seated in the enclosure of St. James's Park one day, when our attention was attracted by a man whom we immediately set down in our own mind as one of this class. He was a tall, thin, pale person, in a black coat, scanty gray trousers, little pinched-up gaiters, and brown beaver gloves. He had an umbrella in his hand—not for use, for the day was fine; but evidently because he always carried one to the office in the morning: and he walked up and down, before the little patch of grass on which the chairs are placed for hire, not as if he were doing it for pleasure or recreation, but as if it were a matter of compulsion—just as he

walks to the office every morning from the back settlements of Islington. It was a Monday—Easter Monday: he had escaped for four-and-twenty hours from the thraldom of the desk, and was walking here for exercise and amusement—perhaps for the first time in his life. We were inclined to think he had never had a holiday before, and that even now he did not exactly know what to do with himself. Children were playing on the grass, groups of people were loitering about, chatting and laughing—but the man walked steadily up and down, unheeding and unheeded, his spare pale face looking as if it were incapable of bearing the expression of curiosity or interest. Altogether, there was something in his manner and appearance which told us, we fancied, his whole life or rather his whole day, for a man of this sort has no variety. We almost saw the dingy little back office into which he walks every morning hanging his hat on the same peg, and placing his legs beneath the same desk, first taking off that black coat which lasts the year through, and putting on the one which did duty last year and which he keeps in his desk to save the other. There he sits till five o'clock, only rais-

ing his head when some one enters the counting-house, or when, in the midst of some difficult calculation, he looks up to the ceiling as if there were inspiration in the dusty skylight with a green knot in the centre of every pane of glass; and there he works, the day through, as regularly as the dial over the mantelpiece, whose loud ticking is almost as monotonous as his own existence.

About five, or half-past, he slowly dismounts from his accustomed stool, and again changing his coat, proceeds to his usual dining-place, somewhere near Bucklersbury. The waiter recites the bill of fare in rather a confidential manner—for he is a regular customer—and after inquiring "What's in the best cut?" and "what was up last," he orders a small plate of roast beef, with greens, and half-a-pint of porter. He has a small plate to-day, because greens are a penny more than potatoes, and he had "two breads" yesterday, with the additional enormity of "a cheese" the day before. This important point being settled, he hangs up his hat—he took it off the moment he sat down—and bespeaks the paper after the next gentleman. If he can get it, while he is at dinner,

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he appears to eat it with much greater zest: balancing it against the water-bottle, and eating a bit of beef, and reading a line or two, alternately. Exactly at five minutes before the hour is up, he produces a shilling, pays the reckoning, carefully deposits the change in his waistcoat-pocket (first deducting a penny for the waiter), and returns to the office, from which, if it is not foreign-post night, he again sallies forth in about half an hour. He then walks home at his usual pace, to his little back room at Islington, where he has his tea, perhaps solacing himself during the meal with the conversation of his landlady's little boy, whom he occasionally rewards with a penny, for solving problems in simple addition.

Sometimes there is a letter or two to take up to his employer's, in Bernard-street, Russell-square; and then the wealthy man of business, hearing his voice, calls out from the dining-parlour,—"Come in, Mr. Smith:" and Mr. Smith, putting his hat at the feet of one of the hall chairs, walks timidly in, and being condescendingly desired to sit down, carefully tucks up his legs under his chair, and sits at a considerable distance from the table while he

drinks the glass of sherry which is poured out for him by the eldest boy, and after drinking which, he backs and slides out of the room, in a state of nervous agitation, from which he does not perfectly recover until he finds himself once more in the Islington-road.

Poor, harmless creatures these men are. Contented but not happy. Broken-spirited and humbled, they may feel no pain, but they never know pleasure.

Compare these men with another class of beings who, like them, have neither friend nor companion, but whose position in society is the result of their own choice. These are generally old fellows, with white heads and red faces, addicted to port wine and Hessian boots, who from some cause, real or imaginary—generally the former, the excellent reason being that they are rich, and their relations poor—grow suspicious of every body, and do the misanthropical in chambers, taking great delight in thinking themselves unhappy, and making every body they come near, miserable. You may see such men as these any where; you will know them at coffee-houses by their discontented excla-

mations and the luxury of their dinners, at theatres, by their always sitting in the same place, and looking with a jaundiced eye on all the young people near them, at church by the pomposity with which they enter, and the loud tone in which they repeat the responses; at parties, by their getting cross at whist and hating music.

An old fellow of this kind will have his chambers splendidly furnished, collecting books, plate, and pictures about him in profusion: not so much for his own gratification, as to annoy those who have the desire, but not the means, to compete with him. He belongs to two or three clubs, and is envied, and flattered, and hated, by the members of them all. Sometimes he will be appealed to by a poor relation —a married nephew perhaps—for some little assistance and relief; and then he will declaim with honest indignation on the improvidence of young married people, the worthlessness of a wife, the insolence of having a family, the atrocity of getting into debt with a hundred and twenty-five pounds a-year, and other unpardonable crimes: winding up his exhortations with a complacent review of his own con-

duct, and a delicate allusion to parochial relief. He dies some day after dinner, of apoplexy, having bequeathed his property to a Bible Society; and the Institution erects a tablet to his memory, expressive of their admiration of his Christian conduct in this world, and their comfortable conviction of his happiness in the next.

Next to our very particular friends, hackney-coachmen, cabmen, and cads, whom we admire in proportion to the extent of their cool impudence and perfect self-possession, there is no class of people who amuse us more than London apprentices. They are no longer an organized body, bound down by solemn compact to terrify his majesty's subjects whenever it pleases them to take offence in their heads and staves in their hands. They are only bound now by indentures; and as to their valour, it is easily restrained by the wholesome dread of the New Police, and a perspective view of a damp station-house, terminating in a police-office and a reprimand. They are still, however, a peculiar class, and not the less pleasant for being inoffensive. Can any one fail to have noticed them in the streets on Sunday? And were there ever such beautiful attempts at the grand and magnificent as

they display in their own proper persons! We walked down the Strand a Sunday or two ago behind a little group who furnished food for our amusement the whole way. They had come out of some part of the city; it was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, and they were on their way to the Park. There were four of them, all arm-in-arm, with white kid gloves like so many bridegrooms, light summer trousers, of unprecedented patterns, and coats for which the English language has as yet no name - a kind of cross between a great coat and a surtout, with the collar of the one, the skirts of the other, and pockets peculiar to themselves.

Each of the gentlemen carried a thick stick with a large tassel at the top, which he occasionally twirled gracefully round, and the whole four by way of looking easy and unconcerned, were walking with a sort of paralytic swagger irresistibly ludicrous. One of the party had got a watch about the size and shape of a Ribston pippin, jammed into his waistcoat pocket, which he carefully compared with the clocks at St. Clement's and the New Church, the illuminated clock at Exeter 'Change, St. Martin's Church,

and the Horse Guards, and when they at last arrived in Saint James's Park, the member of the party who had the best-made boots on, hired a second chair expressly for his feet, and flung himself on this two-pennyworth of sylvan luxury with an air which levelled all distinctions between Brookes's and Snooks's, Crockford's and Bagnigge Wells.

We may smile at such people as these, but they can never excite our anger. They are usually on the best terms with themselves, and it follows almost as a matter of course, in good humour with every one about them. And if they do display a little occasional foolery in their own proper persons, it is surely more tolerable than the precocious puppyism of the Quadrant, the whiskered dandyism of Regent-street and Pall-mall, or gallantry in its dotage any where.

A Visit to Newgate.

"The force of habit" is a trite phrase in every body's mouth, and it is not a little remarkable that those who use it most, as applied to others, unconsciously afford in their own persons singular examples of the power which habit and custom exercise over the minds of men, and of the little reflection they are apt to bestow on subjects with which every day's experience has rendered them familiar. If Bedlam could be suddenly removed like another Aladdin's palace, and set down on the space now occupied by Newgate, scarcely one man out of a hundred, whose road to business every morning lies through Newgate-street or the Old Bailey, would pass the building without bestowing a hasty glance on its small, grated windows, and a transient thought at least upon the condition

of the unhappy beings immured in its dismal cells. And yet these same men, day by day, and hour by hour, pass and repass this gloomy depository of the guilt and misery of London, in one perpetual stream of life and bustle, utterly unmindful of the throng of wretched creatures pent up within it—nay not even knowing, or if they do, not heeding the fact, that as they pass one particular angle of the massive wall, with a light laugh, or a merry whistle, they stand within one yard of a fellow creature, bound and helpless, whose hours are numbered, from whom the last feeble ray of hope has fled for ever, and whose miserable career will shortly terminate in a violent and shameful death. Contact with death even in its least terrible shape is solemn and appalling. How much more awful is it to reflect on this near vicinity to the dying —to men in full health and vigour, in the flower of youth or the prime of life, with all their faculties and perceptions as acute and perfect as your own; but dying, nevertheless—dying as surely—with the hand of death imprinted upon them as indelibly—as if mortal disease had wasted their frames to shadows, and loathsome corruption had already begun!

It was with some such thoughts as these, that we determined not many weeks since, to visit the interior of Newgate—in an amateur capacity, of course; and having carried our intention into effect, we proceed to lay its results before our readers, in the hope—founded more upon the nature of the subject than on any presumptuous confidence in our own descriptive powers—that this paper may not be found wholly devoid of interest. We have only to premise that we do not intend to fatigue the reader with any statistical accounts of the prison; they will be found, at length, in numerous reports of numerous committees, and a variety of authorities of equal weight. We took no notes, made no memoranda, measured none of the yards, ascertained the exact number of inches in no particular room—are unable even to report of how many apartments the jail is composed.

We saw the prison, and saw the prisoners; and what we did see, and what we thought, we will tell at once in our own way.

Having delivered our credentials to the servant who answered our knock at the door of the governor's house, we were ushered into the "office"—a little room on the right hand side

as you enter, with two windows looking into the Old Bailey: fitted up like an ordinary attorney's office, or merchant's counting-house, with the usual fixtures—a wainscotted partition, a shelf or two, a desk, a couple of stools, a pair of clerks, an almanack, a clock, and a few maps. After a little delay, occasioned by sending into the interior of the prison, for the officer whose duty it was to chaperon us, that functionary arrived—a respectable looking man of about two or three and fifty, in a broad-brimmed hat, and full suit of black, who, but for his keys, would have looked quite as much like a clergyman as a turnkey. We were quite disappointed—he had not even top-boots on.

Following our conductor by a door opposite to that at which we had entered, we arrived at a small room, without any other furniture than a little desk, with a book for visitors' autographs: and a shelf on which were a few boxes for papers, and casts of the heads and faces of the two notorious murderers, Bishop and Williams—the former, in particular, exhibiting a style of head and set of features which would have afforded sufficient moral grounds for his instant execution at any time, even had there been no

other evidence against him. Leaving this room also by an opposite door, we found ourselves in the lodge which opens on the Old Bailey, one side of which is plentifully garnished with a choice collection of heavy sets of irons, including those worn by the redoubtable Jack Sheppard—genuine; and those *said* to have been graced by the sturdy limbs of the no less celebrated Dick Turpin—doubtful.* From this lodge, a heavy oaken gate, bound with iron, studded with nails of the same material, and guarded by another turnkey, opens on a few steps, if we remember right, which terminate in a narrow and dismal stone passage running parallel with the Old Bailey, and leading to the different yards, through a number of tortuous and intricate windings, guarded in their turn by huge gates and gratings, whose appearance is sufficient to dispel at once the slightest hope of escape that any new-comer

* The author of *Rookwood*, assures us, in his last elegant edition of that popular work, that these fetters are apocryphal. We have not the least doubt of the fact, when it is stated by such an authority. Mr. Ainsworth has made Turpin his own. After the ride he has given us in company with that renowned hero, we will implicitly believe anything he may please to write about him—and be very grateful for it, into the bargain.

may have entertained: and the very recollection of which, on mentally traversing the place again, involves one in a maze of confusion.

It is necessary to explain here, that the buildings in the prison—or in other words the different wards—form an oblong square, of which the four sides abut respectively on the Old Bailey, the old college of Physicians (now forming a part of Newgate-market), the Sessions-house, and Newgate-street. The intermediate space is divided into several paved yards, in which the prisoners take such air and exercise as can be had in such a place. These yards, with the exception of that in which prisoners under sentence of death are confined (of which we shall presently give a more detailed description), run parallel with Newgate-street, and consequently from the Old Bailey as it were, to Newgate-market.

The womens' side is in the right wing of the prison, nearest the Sessions-house. As we were introduced into this part of the building first, we will adopt the same order, and introduce our readers to it also.

Turning to the right, then, down the passage to which we just now adverted, omitting any

mention of intervening gates;—for if we noticed every gate that was unlocked for us to pass through, and locked again as soon as we had passed, we should require a gate at every comma—we came to a door composed of thick bars of wood, through which were discernible, passing to and fro in a narrow yard, some twenty women, the majority of whom however, as soon as they were aware of the presence of strangers, retreated to their wards. One side of this yard is railed off for a considerable distance, and formed into a kind of iron cage, about five feet ten inches in height, roofed at the top, and defended in front by iron bars, from which the friends of the female prisoners communicate with them. In one corner of this singular-looking den, was a yellow, haggard, decrepit old woman, in a tattered gown that had once been black, and the remains of an old straw bonnet with faded ribbon of the same hue, in earnest conversation with a young girl—a prisoner of course—of about two-and-twenty. It is impossible to imagine a more poverty-stricken object, than the visitor, or a creature so borne down, soul and body, by excess of misery and destitution. The girl was a good-looking robust female, with

a profusion of hair streaming about in the wind —for she had no bonnet on—and a man's silk pocket-handkerchief was loosely thrown over a most ample pair of shoulders. The old woman was talking in that low, stifled tone of voice which tells so forcibly of mental anguish, and every now and then burst into an irrepressible sharp, abrupt cry of grief, the most distressing sound that human ears can hear. The girl was perfectly unmoved. Hardened beyond all hope of redemption, she listened doggedly to her mother's entreaties, whatever they were: and, beyond inquiring after "Jem," and eagerly catching at the few halfpence her miserable parent had brought her, took no more apparent interest in the conversation than the most unconcerned spectators. God knows there were enough of them, in the persons of the other prisoners in the yard, who were no more concerned by what was passing before their eyes, and within their hearing, than if they were blind and deaf. Why should they be? Inside the prison, and out, such scenes were too familiar to them, to excite even a passing thought, unless of ridicule or contempt for the display of feelings which they had long since forgotten, and lost all sympathy for.

A little further on, a squalid-looking woman in a slovenly, thick-bordered cap, with her arms muffled up in a large red shawl, the fringed ends of which, straggled nearly to the bottom of a dirty white apron, was communicating some instructions to *her* visitor—her daughter evidently. The girl was thinly clad, and shaking with the cold. Some ordinary word of recognition passed between her and her mother, when she appeared at the grating, but neither hope, condolence, regret, nor affection, was expressed on either side. The mother whispered her instructions, and the girl received them with her pinched-up, half-starved features, twisted into an expression of careful cunning. It was some scheme for the woman's defence that she was disclosing, and a sullen smile came over the girl's face for an instant, as if she were pleased, not so much at the probability of her mother's liberation, as at the chance of her "getting off" in spite of her prosecutors. The dialogue was soon concluded, and, with the same careless indifference with which they had approached each other, the mother turned towards the inner end of the yard, and the girl to the gate at which she had entered.

This girl belonged to a class—unhappily but too extensive—the very existence of which should make men's hearts bleed. Barely past her childhood, it required but a glance to discover that she was one of those children, born and bred in poverty and vice, who have never known what childhood is; who have never been taught to love and court a parent's smile, or to dread a parent's frown. The thousand nameless endearments of childhood, its gaiety, and its innocence, are alike unknown to them. They have entered at once upon the stern realities and miseries of life, and to their better nature it is hopeless to appeal in after-times, by any of the references which will awaken, if it be only for a moment, some good feeling in ordinary bosoms, however corrupt they may have become. Talk to them of parental solicitude, the happy days of childhood, and the merry games of infancy! Tell them of hunger and the streets, beggary and stripes, the gin-shop, the station-house, and the pawnbrokers, and they will understand you.

Two or three women were standing at different parts of the grating, conversing with their friends, but a very large proportion of the pri-

soners appeared to have no friends at all, beyond such of their old companions as might happen to be within the walls. So passing hastily down the yard, and pausing only for an instant to notice the little incidents we have just recorded, we were conducted up a clean and well-lighted flight of stone stairs to one of the wards. There are several in this part of the building, but a description of one is a description of the whole.

It was a spacious, bare, whitewashed apartment, lighted, of course, by windows looking into the interior of the prison, but far more light and airy than one could reasonably expect to find in such a situation. There was a large fire with a deal table before it, round which ten or a dozen women were seated on wooden forms at dinner. Along both sides of the room ran a shelf; and below it, at regular intervals, a row of large hooks were fixed in the wall, on each of which was hung the sleeping-mat of a prisoner; her rug and blanket being folded up, and placed on the shelf above. At night these mats are placed upon the floor, each beneath the hook on which it hangs during the day; and the ward is thus made to answer the pur-

poses both of a day-room and sleeping apartment. Over the fireplace was a large sheet of pasteboard, on which were displayed a variety of texts from Scripture, which were also scattered about the room in scraps about the size and shape of the copy-slips which are used in schools. On the table was a sufficient provision of a kind of stewed beef, and brown bread, in pewter dishes, which are kept perfectly bright, and displayed on shelves in great order and regularity when they are not in use.

The women rose hastily on our entrance, and retired in a hurried manner to either side of the fireplace. They were all cleanly--many of them decently—attired, and there was nothing peculiar either in their appearance or demeanour. One or two resumed the needlework which they had probably laid aside at the commencement of their meal, others gazed at the visitors with a sort of listless curiosity, and a few retired behind their companions to the very end of the room, as if desirous to avoid even the casual observation of the strangers. Some old Irish women, both in this and other wards, to whom the thing was no novelty, appeared perfectly indifferent to our presence, and remained stand-

ing close to the seats from which they had just risen; but the general feeling among the females, seemed to be one of uneasiness during the period of our stay among them, which was very brief. Not a word was uttered during the time of our remaining, unless, indeed, by the wardswoman in reply to some question which we put to the turnkey who accompanied us. In every ward on the female side a wardswoman is appointed to preserve order, and a similar regulation is adopted among the males. The wardsmen and wardswomen are all prisoners, selected for good conduct. They alone are allowed the privilege of sleeping on bedsteads; a small stump bedstead being placed in every ward for that purpose. On both sides of the jail is a small receiving-room, to which prisoners are conducted on their first reception, and from whence they cannot be removed until they have been examined by the surgeon of the prison.

Retracing our steps to the dismal passage in which we found ourselves at first (and which, by the by, contains three or four dark cells for the close confinement of refractory prisoners) we were led through a narrow yard to the "school" —a portion of the prison set apart for boys under

fourteen years of age. In a tolerable-sized room, in which were writing materials and some copy-books, was the schoolmaster, with a couple of his pupils; and the remainder having been fetched from an adjoining apartment, the whole were drawn up in line for our inspection.

There were fourteen of them in all, some with shoes, some without, some in pinafores without jackets, others in jackets without pinafores, and one in scarce any thing at all. The whole number, without an exception we believe, had been committed for trial on charges of pocket-picking: and fourteen such villainous little faces we never beheld.—There was not one redeeming feature among them—not a glance of honesty—not a wink expressive of any thing but the gallows and the hulks, in the whole collection. As to any thing like shame or contrition, they were evidently quite gratified at being thought worth the trouble of looking at. Their idea appeared to be, that we had come to see Newgate as a grand affair, and that they were an indispensable part of the show: and every boy as he "fell in" to the line, actually seemed as pleased and important, as if he had done something excessively meritorious

in getting there at all. We never looked upon a more disagreeable sight, because we never saw fourteen such hopeless and irreclaimable little wretches before.

On either side of the school-yard, is a yard for men, in one of which—that towards Newgate-street—prisoners of the more respectable class are confined. Of the other, we have little description to offer, as the different wards necessarily partake of the same character. They are provided, like the wards on the women's side, with mats and rugs, which are disposed of in the same manner during the day; and the only very striking difference between their appearance and that of the wards inhabited by the females, is, the utter absence of any employment whatever. Huddled together upon two opposite forms, by the fireside, sit twenty men perhaps; here a boy in livery, there a man in a rough great-coat and top-boots; further on, a desperate-looking fellow in his shirt-sleeves, with an old Scotch cap upon his shaggy head; near him again, a tall ruffian, in a smock frock: and next to him a miserable being of distressed appearance, with his head resting on his hand;—but all alike in one respect, all idle and listless: when they do leave the

fire, sauntering moodily about, lounging in the window, or leaning against the wall, vacantly swinging their bodies to and fro. With the exception of a man reading an old newspaper, in two or three instances, this was the case in every ward we entered.

The only communication these men have with their friends, is through two close iron gratings, with an intermediate space of about a yard in width between the two, so that nothing can be handed across, nor can the prisoner have any communication by touch, with the person who visits him. The married men have a separate grating, at which to see their wives, but its construction is the same.

The prison chapel is situated at the back of the governor's house, the latter having no windows looking into the interior of the prison. Whether the associations connected with the place—the knowledge that here a portion of the burial service is, on some dreadful occasions, performed over the quick, and not upon the dead—cast over it a still more gloomy and sombre air than art has imparted to it, we know not, but its appearance is very striking. There is something in a silent and deserted place of

worship highly solemn and impressive at any time: and the very dissimilarity of this one, from any we have been accustomed to, only enhances the impression. The meanness of its appointments—the bare and scanty pulpit, with the paltry painted pillars on either side — the women's gallery with its great heavy curtain, the men's with its unpainted benches and dingy front—the tottering little table at the altar, with the commandments on the wall above it, scarcely legible through lack of paint, and dust and damp—so unlike the rich velvet and gilding, the stately marble and polished wood, of a modern church—are the more striking from their powerful contrast. There is one object, too, which rivets the attention, and fascinates the gaze, and from which we may turn disgusted and horror-stricken in vain: for the recollection of it, will haunt us, waking and sleeping, for months afterwards. Immediately below the reading-desk, on the floor of the chapel, and forming the most conspicuous object in its little area, is *the condemned pew*—a huge black pen, in which the wretched men who are singled out for death, are placed on the Sunday preceding their execution, in sight

of all their fellow-prisoners, from many of whom they may have been separated but a week before, to hear prayers for their own souls, to join in the responses of their own burial service, and to listen to an address, warning their recent companions to take example by their fate, and urging themselves, while there is yet time—nearly four-and-twenty hours—to "turn, and flee from the wrath to come!"

Imagine what have been the feelings of the men whom that fearful pew has enclosed, and of whom, between the gallows and the knife, no mortal remnant may now remain; think of the hopeless clinging to life to the last: and the wild despair, far exceeding in anguish the felon's death itself, with which they have heard the certainty of their speedy transmission to another world, with all their crimes upon their heads, rung into their ears by the officiating clergyman!

At one time—and at no distant period either—the coffins of the men about to be executed, were placed in that pew, upon the seat by their side, during the whole service. It may seem incredible, but it is strictly true. Let us hope

that the increased spirit of civilization and humanity which abolished this frightful and degrading custom, may extend itself to other usages equally barbarous; usages which have not even the plea of utility in their defence, as every year's experience has shown them to be more and more inefficacious.

Leaving the chapel, descending to the passage so frequently alluded to, and crossing the yard before noticed, as being allotted to prisoners of a more respectable description than the generality of men confined here, the visitor arrives at a thick iron gate of great size and strength. Having been admitted through it, by the turnkey on duty, he turns sharp round to the left, and pauses before another gate; and having passed this last barrier, he stands in the most terrible part of this gloomy building—the condemned ward.

The press-yard, well known by name to newspaper readers, from its frequent mention in accounts of executions, is at the corner of the building, and next to the ordinary's house in Newgate-street, running from Newgate-street, towards the centre of the prison, parallel with Newgate-market. It is a long, narrow court,

of which a portion of the wall in Newgate-street forms one end, and the gate the other. At the upper end, on the left-hand—that is, adjoining the wall in Newgate-street—is a cistern of water, and at the bottom a double grating (of which the gate itself forms a part) similar to that before described. Through these grates the prisoners are allowed to see their friends, a turnkey always remaining in the vacant space between, during the whole interview. Immediately on the right as you enter, is a building containing the press-room, day-room, and cells; the yard is on every side surrounded by lofty walls, guarded by *chevaux de frise;* and the whole is under the constant inspection of vigilant and experienced turnkeys.

In the first apartment into which we were conducted—which was at the top of a staircase, and immediately over the press-room—were five-and-twenty or thirty prisoners, all under sentence of death, awaiting the result of the recorder's report—men of all ages and appearances, from a hardened old offender with swarthy face, and grizzly beard of three days' growth, to a handsome boy, not fourteen years old, and of singularly youthful appearance even for that

age, who had been condemned for burglary. There was nothing remarkable in the appearance of these prisoners. One or two decently-dressed men were brooding with a dejected air over the fire; several little groups of two or three had been engaged in conversation at the upper end of the room, or in the windows; and the remainder were crowded round a young man seated at the table, who appeared to have been engaged in teaching the younger ones to write.

The room was large, airy, and clean. There was very little anxiety or mental suffering depicted in the countenance of any of the men. They had all been sentenced to death, it is true, and the recorder's report had not yet been made; but we question whether there was one man among them, notwithstanding, who did not *know* that although he had undergone the ceremony, it never was intended that his life should be sacrificed. On the table lay a testament, but there were no signs of its having been in recent use.

In the press-room below, were three men, the nature of whose offence rendered it necessary to separate them, even from their companions in guilt. It is a long, sombre room, with two

windows sunk into the stone wall: and here the wretched men are pinioned on the morning of their execution, before moving towards the scaffold. The fate of one of these men was uncertain; some mitigatory circumstances having come to light since his trial, which had been humanely represented in the proper quarter. The other two had nothing to expect from the mercy of the crown; their doom was sealed; no plea could be urged in extenuation of their crime, and they well knew that for them there was no hope in this world. "The two short ones," the turnkey whispered, "were dead men."

The man to whom we have alluded, as entertaining some hopes of escape, was lounging at the greatest distance he could place between himself and his companions, in the window nearest the door. He was probably aware of our approach, and had assumed an air of courageous indifference; his face was purposely averted towards the window, and he stirred not an inch while we were present. The other two men were at the upper end of the room. One of them, who was imperfectly seen in the dim light, had his back towards us, and was stooping

over the fire with his right arm on the mantelpiece, and his head sunk upon it. The other was leaning on the sill of the furthest window. The light fell full upon him, and communicated to his pale, haggard face, and disordered hair, an appearance which, at that distance, was perfectly ghastly. His cheek rested upon his hand, and, with his face a little raised, and his eyes widely staring before him, he seemed to be unconsciously intent on counting the chinks in the opposite wall. We passed this room again afterwards. The first man was pacing up and down the court with a firm military step—he was a soldier in the foot-guards—and a cloth cap jauntily thrown on one side of his head; he bowed respectfully to our conductor, and the salute was returned. The other two still remained in the positions we have described, and were motionless as statues.*

A few paces up the yard, and forming a continuation of the building in which are the two rooms we have just quitted, lie the condemned cells. The entrance is by a narrow and obscure staircase, leading to a dark passage in which a

* These two men were executed shortly afterwards. The other was respited during his majesty's pleasure.

charcoal stove casts a dismal lurid tint over the objects in its immediate vicinity, and diffuses something like warmth around. From the left-hand side of this passage, the massive door of every cell on the story opens, and from it alone can they be approached. There are three of these passages, and three of these ranges of cells, one above the other, but in size, furniture, and appearance, they are all precisely alike. Prior to the recorder's report being made, all the prisoners under sentence of death, are removed from the day-room at five o'clock in the afternoon, and locked up in these cells, where they are allowed a candle until ten o'clock, and a bible and prayer book: and here they remain until seven next morning. When the warrant for a prisoner's execution arrives, he is immediately removed to the cells, and confined in one of them until he leaves it for the scaffold. He is at liberty to walk in the yard, but both in his walks, and in his cell, he is constantly attended by a turnkey, who never leaves him on any pretence whatever.

We entered the first cell. It was a stone dungeon, eight feet long by six wide, with a bench at the further end, under which were a

common horse-rug, a bible, and prayer-book. An iron candlestick was fixed into the wall at the side; and a small high window in the back admitted as much air and light as could struggle in, between a double row of heavy, crossed iron bars. It contained no other furniture of any description.

Conceive the situation of a man, spending his last night on earth in this cell. Buoyed up with some vague and undefined hope of reprieve, he knew not why—indulging in some wild and visionary idea of escaping, he knew not how—hour after hour of the three preceding days allowed him for preparation, has fled with a speed which no man living would deem possible, for none but this dying man can know. He has wearied his friends with entreaties, exhausted the attendants with importunities, neglected in his feverish restlessness the timely warnings of his spiritual consoler; and now that the illusion is at last dispelled, now that eternity is before him, and guilt behind: now that his fears of death amount almost to madness, and an overwhelming sense of his helpless, hopeless state rushes upon him, he is lost and stupified, and has neither thoughts to turn

to, nor power to call upon, the Almighty Being from whom alone he can seek mercy and forgiveness, and before whom his repentance can alone avail.

Hours have glided by, and still he sits upon the same stone bench with folded arms, heedless alike of the fast decreasing time before him, and the urgent entreaties of the good man at his side. The feeble light is wasting gradually, and the deathlike stillness of the street without, broken only by the rumbling of some passing vehicle, which echoes mournfully through the empty yards, warns him that the night is waning fast away.

The deep bell of St. Paul's strikes—one! He heard it; it has roused him. Seven hours left! He paces the narrow limits of his cell with rapid strides, cold drops of terror starting on his forehead, and every muscle of his frame quivering with agony. Seven hours! He suffers himself to be led to his seat, mechanically takes the bible which is placed in his hand, and tries to read and listen. No: his thoughts *will* wander. The book is torn and soiled by use—how like the book he read his lesson in, at school, just forty years ago!

He has never bestowed a thought upon it, since he left it as a child; and yet the place, the time, the room—nay, the very boys he played with, crowd as vividly before him as if they were scenes of yesterday; and some forgotten phrase, some childish word of kindness, rings in his ears like the echo of one uttered but a minute since. The deep voice of the clergyman recals him to himself. He is reading from the sacred book its solemn promises of pardon for repentance, and its awful denunciation of obdurate men. He falls upon his knees and clasps his hands to pray. Hush! what sound was that? He starts upon his feet. It cannot be two yet. Hark! Two quarters have struck—the third—the fourth. It is! Six hours left. Tell him not of repentance or comfort. Six hours' repentance for eight times six years of guilt and crime! He buries his face in his hands, and throws himself on the bench.

Worn out with watching and excitement, he sleeps, and the same unsettled state of mind pursues him in his dreams. An insupportable load is taken from his breast; he is walking with his wife in a pleasant field, with the bright blue sky above them, and a fresh and bound-

less prospect on every side—how different from the stone walls of Newgate! And she is looking—not as she did when he saw her for the last time in that dreadful place, but as she used to do, when he loved her—long, long ago, before misery and ill-treatment had altered her looks, and vice had changed his nature. She is leaning upon his arm, and looking up into his face with tenderness and affection—and he does *not* strike her now, nor rudely shake her from him. And oh! how glad he is to tell her all he had forgotten in that last hurried interview, and to fall on his knees before her, and fervently beseech her pardon for all the unkindness and cruelty that wasted her form and broke her heart! The scene suddenly changes. He is on his trial again: there are the judge and jury, and prosecutors, and witnesses, just as they were before. How full the court is—what a sea of heads—with a gallows, too, and a scaffold—and how all those people stare at *him!* Verdict, "Guilty." No matter; he will escape.

The night is dark and cold, the gates have been left open, and in an instant he is in the street, flying from the scene of his imprison-

ment like the wind. The streets are cleared, the open fields are gained, and the broad wide country lies before him. Onward he dashes in the midst of darkness, over hedge and ditch, through mud and pool, bounding from spot to spot with a speed and lightness, astonishing even himself. At length he pauses: he must be safe from pursuit now. He will stretch himself on that bank, and sleep till sunrise.

A period of unconsciousness succeeds. He wakes cold and wretched. The dull gray light of morning, is stealing into the cell, and falls upon the form of the attendant turnkey. Confused by his dreams, he starts from his uneasy bed in momentary uncertainty. It is but momentary. Every object in that narrow cell is too frightfully real, to admit of doubt or mistake. He is the condemned felon again, guilty and despairing; and in two hours more he is a corpse.

London Recreations.

The wish of persons in the humbler classes of life, to ape the manners and customs of those whom fortune has placed above them, is often the subject of remark, and not unfrequently of complaint. The inclination may, and no doubt does, exist to a great extent, among the small gentility—the would-be aristocrats—of the middle classes. Tradesmen and clerks, with fashionable novel-reading families, and circulating-library-subscribing daughters, get up tavern assemblies in humble imitation of Almack's, and promenade the dingy "large room" of some second-rate hotel with as much complacency as the enviable few who are privileged to exhibit their magnificence in that exclusive haunt of fashion and foolery. Aspiring young ladies, who read flaming accounts of some "fancy fair

in high life," suddenly grow desperately charitable; visions of admiration and matrimony float before their eyes; some wonderfully meritorious institution, which, by the strangest accident in the world, has never been heard of before, is discovered to be in a languishing condition: Thomson's great room, or Johnson's nursery ground, is forthwith engaged, and the aforesaid young ladies, from mere charity, exhibit themselves for three days, from twelve to four, for the small charge of one shilling per head! With the exception of these classes of society, however, and a few other weak and insignificant persons, we do not think the contemptible attempt at imitation to which we have alluded, prevails in any great degree. The different character of the recreations of different classes, has often afforded us amusement in our walks and musings; and we have chosen it for the subject of our present sketch, in the hope that it may possess some amusement for our readers.

If the regular City man, who leaves Lloyd's at five o'clock, and drives home to Hackney, Clapton, Stamford-hill, or elsewhere, can be

said to have any daily recreation beyond his dinner, it is his garden. He never does any thing to it with his own hands; but he takes a great pride in it notwithstanding; and if you are desirous of paying your addresses to the youngest daughter, be sure to be in raptures with every flower and shrub it contains. If your poverty of expression compel you to make any distinction between the two, we would certainly recommend your bestowing more admiration on his garden, than his wine. He always takes a walk round it, before he starts for town in the morning, and is particularly anxious that the fish-pond should be kept specially neat. If you call on him on Sunday in summer time, about an hour before dinner, you will find him sitting in an arm-chair, on the lawn behind the house, with a straw hat on, reading a Sunday paper. A short distance from him you will most likely observe a handsome paroquet in a large brass-wire cage; ten to one but the two eldest girls are loitering in one of the side walks, accompanied by a couple of young fellows, who are holding parasols over them—of course only to keep the sun off—while the younger children,

with the under nursery-maid, are strolling listlessly about, in the shade. Beyond these occasions, his delight in his garden appears to arise more from the consciousness of possession than actual enjoyment of it. When he drives you down to dinner on a week day, he is rather fatigued with the occupations of the morning, and tolerably cross into the bargain ; but when the cloth is removed, and he has drank three or four glasses of his favourite port, he orders the French windows of his dining-room (which of course look into the garden) to be opened, and throwing a silk handkerchief over his head, and leaning back in his arm-chair, descants at considerable length upon its beauty, and the cost of maintaining it. This is to impress you—who are a young friend of the family—with a due sense of the excellence of the garden, and the wealth of its owner ; and when he has exhausted the subject, he goes to sleep.

There is another and a very different class of men, whose recreation is their garden. An individual of this class, resides some short distance from town—say in the Hampstead-road, or the Kilburn-road, or any other road where the houses are small and neat, and have little

slips of back garden. He and his wife—who is as clean and compact a little body as himself—have occupied the same house ever since he retired from business twenty years ago. They have no family. They once had a son, who died at about five years old. The child's portrait hangs over the mantelpiece in the best sitting-room, and a little cart he used to draw about is carefully preserved as a relic.

In fine weather the old gentleman is almost constantly in the garden; and when it is too wet to go into it, he will look out of the window at it, by the hour together. He has always something to do there, and you will see him digging, and sweeping, and cutting, and planting, with manifest delight. In spring time, there is no end to the sowing of seeds, and sticking little bits of wood over them, with labels, which look like epitaphs to their memory; and in the evening, when the sun has gone down, the perseverance with which he lugs a great watering-pot about, is perfectly astonishing. The only other recreation he has, is the newspaper, which he peruses every day, from beginning to end, generally reading the most interesting pieces of intelligence to his wife, during breakfast. The old

lady is very fond of flowers, as the hyacinth-glasses in the parlour window, and geranium-pots in the little front court, testify. She takes a great pride in the garden too: and when one of the four fruit-trees produces rather a larger gooseberry than usual, it is carefully preserved under a wine-glass on the sideboard, for the edification of visitors, who are duly informed that Mr. So-and-so planted the tree which produced it, with his own hands. On a summer's evening, when the large watering-pot has been filled and emptied some fourteen times, and the old couple have quite exhausted themselves by trotting about, you will see them sitting happily together in the little summer-house, enjoying the calm and peace of the twilight, and watching the shadows as they fall upon the garden, and gradually growing thicker and more sombre, obscure the tints of their gayest flowers —no bad emblem of the years that have silently rolled over their heads, deadening in their course, the brighest hues of early hopes and feelings which have long since faded way. These are their only recreations, and they require no more. They have within themselves, the materials of comfort and content; and the only anxiety of each, is to die before the other.

This is no ideal sketch. There *used* to be many old people of this description; their numbers may have diminished, and may decrease still more. Whether the course female education has taken of late days—whether the pursuit of giddy frivolities, and empty nothings, has tended to unfit women for that quiet domestic life, in which they show far more beautifully than in the most crowded assembly, is a question we should feel little gratification in discussing: we hope not.

Let us turn now, to another portion of the London population, whose recreations present about as strong a contrast as can well be conceived—we mean the Sunday pleasurers; and let us beg our readers to imagine themselves stationed by our side in some well-known rural "Tea-gardens."

The heat is intense this afternoon, and the people, of whom there are additional parties arriving every moment, look as warm as the tables which have been recently painted, and have the appearance of being red-hot. What a dust and noise! Men and women—boys and girls—sweethearts and married people—babies in arms, and children in chaises—pipes and shrimps—cigars and periwinkles—

George Cruikshank

tea and tobacco. Gentlemen, in alarming waistcoats, and steel watch-guards, promenading about, three abreast, with surprising dignity (or as the gentleman in the next box facetiously observes, "cutting it uncommon fat!")—ladies, with great, long, white pocket-handkerchiefs like small table-cloths, in their hands, chasing one another on the grass in the most playful and interesting manner, with the view of attracting the attention of the aforesaid gentlemen—husbands in perspective ordering bottles of ginger-beer for the objects of their affections, with a lavish disregard of expense; and the said objects washing down huge quantities of "shrimps" and "winkles," with an equal disregard of their own bodily health and subsequent comfort—boys, with great silk hats just balanced on the top of their heads, smoking cigars, and trying to look as if they liked 'em—gentlemen in pink shirts and blue waistcoats, occasionally upsetting either themselves, or somebody else, with their own canes.

Some of the finery of these people provokes a smile, but they are all clean, and happy, and disposed to be good-natured and sociable. Those two motherly looking women in the smart pe-

lisses, who are chatting so confidentially, inserting a "ma'am" at every fourth word, scraped an acquaintance about a quarter of an hour ago: it originated in admiration of the little boy who belongs to one of them—that diminutive specimen of mortality in the three-cornered pink satin hat with black feathers. The two men in the blue coats and drab trousers, who are walking up and down, smoking their pipes, are their husbands. The party in the opposite box are a pretty fair specimen of the generality of the visiters. There are the father and mother, and old grandmother, a young man and woman, and an individual addressed by the euphonious title of "Uncle Bill," who is evidently the wit of the party. They have some half-dozen children with them, but it is scarcely necessary to notice the fact, for it's a matter of course here. Every woman in "the gardens," who has been married for any length of time, must have had twins on two or three occasions; it is impossible to account for the extent of juvenile population in any other way. Observe the inexpressible delight of the old grandmother, at Uncle Bill's splendid joke of "tea for four: bread and butter for forty;" and the loud explosion of

mirth which follows his wafering a paper "pig-tail" on the waiter's collar. The young man is evidently "keeping company" with Uncle Bill's niece: and Uncle Bill's hints—such as "Don't forget me at the dinner, you know," "I shall look out for the cake, Sally," "I'll be godfather to your first—wager it's a boy," and so forth, are equally embarrassing to the young people, and delightful to the elder ones. As to the old grandmother, she's in perfect ecstacies, and does nothing but laugh herself into fits of coughing, until they have finished the "gin-and-water warm with," of which Uncle Bill ordered "glasses round" after tea, "jist to keep the night air out, and do it up comfortable and riglar arter sitch a day, which certainly was 'raythor warm,' as the child said when it fell in the fire."

It is getting dark, and the people begin to move. The field leading to town is quite full of them; the little hand-chaises are dragged wearily along, the children are tired, and amuse themselves and the company generally by crying, or resort to the much more pleasant expedient of going to sleep—the mothers begin to wish they were at home again—sweethearts

grow more sentimental than ever, as the time for parting arrives—the gardens look mournful enough, by the light of the two lanterns which hang against the trees, for the convenience of smokers—and the waiters, who have been running about incessantly for the last six hours, think they feel a little tired, as they count their glasses and their gains.

The Boarding-House.

CHAPTER 1.

Mrs. Tibbs was, beyond all dispute, the most tidy, fidgetty, thrifty, little personage that ever inhaled the smoke of London; and the house of Mrs. Tibbs, was decidedly the neatest in all Great Coram-street. The area and the area steps, and the street-door and the street door-steps, and the brass handle, and the door-plate, and the knocker, and the fan-light, were all as clean and as bright as indefatigable white-washing, and hearth-stoning, and scrubbing and rubbing could make them. The wonder was, that the brass door-plate, with the interesting inscription "Mrs. Tibbs," had never caught fire from constant friction, so perseveringly was it polished. There were meat-safe-looking wire

blinds in the parlour windows, blue and gold curtains in the drawing-room, and spring-roller blinds, as Mrs. Tibbs was wont in the pride of her heart to boast, "all the way up." The bell-lamp in the passage looked as clear as a soap-bubble; you could see yourself in all the tables, and French-polish yourself on any one of the chairs. The banisters were bees'-waxed, and the very stair wires made your eyes wink, they were so glittering.

Mrs. Tibbs was somewhat short of stature, and Mr. Tibbs was by no means a large man. He had, moreover, very short legs, but by way of indemnification, his face was peculiarly long. He was to his wife, what the 0 is in 90—he was of some importance *with* her—he was nothing without her. Mrs. Tibbs was always talking. Mr. Tibbs rarely spoke; but if it were at any time possible to put in a word, just when he should have said nothing at all, he did it. Mrs. Tibbs detested long stories, and Mr. Tibbs had one, the conclusion of which had never been heard by his most intimate friends. It always began, "I recollect when I was in the volunteer corps, in eighteen hundred and six,"—but as he spoke very slowly and softly, and his better

half very quickly and loudly, he rarely got beyond the introductory sentence. He was a melancholy specimen of the story-teller. He was the wandering Jew of Joe Millerism ever pursuing and ever shunned.

Mr. Tibbs enjoyed a small independence from the pension-list—about 43*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.* a year. His father, mother, and five interesting scions from the same stock, drew a like sum from the revenue of a grateful country, but for what particular service was never distinctly known. But as this said independence was not quite sufficient to furnish two people with *all* the luxuries of this life, it had occurred to the busy little spouse of Tibbs, that the best thing she could do with a legacy of 700*l.*, would be to take, and furnish a tolerable house, somewhere in that partially-explored tract of country which lies between the British Museum, and a remote village called Somers Town, for the reception of boarders. Great Coram-street was the spot pitched upon. The house had been furnished accordingly; two female servants and a boy engaged, and an advertisement inserted in the morning papers, informing the public that "Six individuals would meet with all the comforts of

a cheerful musical home, in a select private family, residing within ten minutes' walk of everywhere." Answers out of number were received, with all sorts of initials; all the letters of the alphabet seemed to be seized with a sudden wish to go out boarding and lodging. Voluminous was the correspondence between Mrs. Tibbs and the applicants, and most profound was the secrecy which was to be observed. "E." didn't like this, and "I." couldn't think of putting up with that; "I. O. U" didn't think the terms would suit him, and "G. R." had never slept in a French bed. The result, however, was, that three gentlemen became inmates of Mrs. Tibbs's house, on terms which were "agreeable to all parties." In went the advertisement again: and a lady, with her two daughters, proposed to increase—not their families, but Mrs. Tibbs's.

"Charming woman, that Mrs. Maplesone!" said Mrs. Tibbs, as she and her spouse were sitting by the fire after breakfast; the gentlemen having gone out on their several avocations. "Charming woman, indeed!" repeated little Mrs. Tibbs, more by way of soliloquy than any thing else, for she never thought of consulting

her husband. "And the two daughters are delightful. We must have some fish to-day; they'll join us at dinner for the first time."

Mr. Tibbs placed the poker at right angles with the fire-shovel, and essayed to speak, but recollected he had nothing to say.

"The young ladies," continued Mrs. T., "have kindly volunteered to bring their own piano."

Tibbs thought of the volunteer story, but did not venture it. A bright thought struck him—"It's very likely" said he—

"Pray don't lean your head against the paper," interrupted Mrs. Tibbs—"and don't put your feet on the steel fender; that's worse."

Tibbs took his head from the paper, and his feet from the fender; and proceeded. "It's very likely one of the young ladies may set her cap at young Mr. Simpson, and you know a marriage"——

"A what!" shrieked Mrs. Tibbs. Tibbs modestly repeated his former suggestion.

"I beg you won't mention such a thing." said Mrs. T. "A marriage, indeed!—to rob me of my boarders—no, not for the world."

Tibbs thought in his own mind that the event

was by no means unlikely, but as he never argued with his wife, he put a stop to the dialogue, by observing it was "time to go to business." He always went out at ten o'clock in the morning, and returned at five in the afternoon, with an exceedingly dirty face, and smelling very mouldy. Nobody knew what he was, or where he went to; but Mrs. Tibbs used to say with an air of great importance, that he was engaged in the City.

The Miss Maplesones, and their accomplished parent, arrived in the course of the afternoon in a hackney-coach, and accompanied by a most astonishing number of packages. Trunks, bonnet-boxes, muff-boxes, parasols, guitar-cases, and parcels of all imaginable shapes, done up in brown paper, and fastened with pins, filled the passage. Then there was such a running up and down with the luggage, such scampering for warm water for the ladies to wash in, and such a bustle, and confusion, and heating of servants, and curling-irons, as had never been known in Great Coram-street before. Little Mrs. Tibbs was quite in her element, bustling about, talking incessantly, and distributing towels and soap, and all the *et ceteras*, like a

head nurse in a hospital. The house was not restored to its usual state of quiet repose, until the ladies were safely shut up in their respective bed-rooms, engaged in the important occupation of dressing for dinner.

"Are these gals andsome?" inquired Mr. Simpson of Mr. Septimus Hicks, another of the boarders, as they were amusing themselves in the drawing room before dinner, by lolling on sofas, and contemplating their pumps.

"Don't know," replied Mr. Septimus Hicks, who was a tallish, white-faced young man, with spectacles, and a black ribbon round his neck instead of a neckerchief—a most interesting person; a poetical walker of the hospitals, and a "very talented young man." He was very fond of "lugging" into conversation, all sorts of quotations from Don Juan, without fettering himself by the propriety of their application, in which particular he was remarkably independent. The other, Mr. Simpson, was one of those young men, who are in society what walking gentlemen are upon the stage, only infinitely worse skilled in his vocation than the most indifferent artist. He was as empty-headed as the great bell of St. Paul's, and his abilities were

about as varied. He always dressed according to the caricatures published in the monthly fashions: and spelt Character with a K.

"I saw a devilish number of parcels in the passage when I came home," simpered Simpson.

"Materials for the toilet, no doubt," rejoined the Don Juan reader.

> "———much linen, lace, and several pair
> Of stockings, slippers, brushes, combs, complete;
> With other articles of ladies fair,
> To keep them beautiful, or leave them neat."

"Is that from Milton?" inquired Mr. Simpson.

"No—from Byron," returned Mr. Hicks, with a look of profound contempt. He was quite sure of his author, because he had never read any other.—"Hush!" said the sapient hospital walker, "Here come the gals," and they forthwith both commenced talking in a very loud key.

"Mrs. Maplesone and the Miss Maplesones, Mr. Hicks. Mr. Hicks—Mrs. Maplesone and the Miss Maplesones," said Mrs. Tibbs, with a very red face, for she had been superintending the cooking operations below stairs, and looking like a wax doll on a sunny day. Mr.

Simpson, I beg your pardon—Mr Simpson—Mrs. Maplesone and the Miss Maplesones"—and *vice versâ*. The gentlemen immediately began to slide about with much politeness, and looked as if they wished their arms had been legs, so little did they know what to do with them. The ladies smiled, curtsied, and glided into chairs, and dived for dropped pocket-handkerchiefs. The gentlemen leant against two of the curtain pegs; Mrs. Tibbs went through an admirable bit of serious pantomime with a servant who had come up to ask some question about the fish sauce, and then the two young ladies looked at each other; and every body else appeared to discover something very attractive in the pattern of the fender.

"Julia, my love," said Mrs. Maplesone to her youngest daughter, in a tone just loud enough for the remainder of the company to hear,—"Julia."

"Yes, Ma."

"Don't stoop."—This was said for the purpose of directing general attention to Miss Julia's figure, which was undeniable. Every body looked at her accordingly, and then there was another pause.

"We had the most uncivil hackney-coachman to-day, you can imagine," said Mrs. Maplesone to Mrs. Tibbs, in a truly confidential tone.

"Dear me!" replied the hostess, with an air of great commiseration. She couldn't say more, for the servant again appeared at the door, and commenced telegraphing most earnestly to her "Missis."

"I think hackney-coachmen generally are uncivil," said Mr. Hicks, in his most insinuating tone

"Positively I think they are," replied Mrs. Maplesone, as if the idea had never struck her before.

"And cabmen, too," said Mr. Simpson. This remark was a failure, for no one intimated, by word or sign, the slightest knowledge of the manners and customs of cabmen.

"Robinson, what *do* you want?" said Mrs. Tibbs to the servant, who by way of making her presence known to her mistress, had been giving sundry hems and sniffs outside the door during the preceding five minutes.

"Please, ma'am, master wants his clean things," replied the servant, completely taken

off her guard. There was no resisting this: the two young men turned their faces to the window, and "went off" like a couple of bottles of ginger beer; the ladies put their handkerchiefs to their mouths, and little Mrs. Tibbs bustled out of the room, to give Tibbs his clean linen, and the servant warning.

Mr. Calton, the remaining boarder, shortly afterwards made his appearance, and proved a surprising promoter of the conversation. Mr. Calton was a superannuated beau—an old boy. He used to say of himself that although his features were not regularly handsome, they were striking. They certainly were: it was impossible to look at his face, without being forcibly reminded of a chubby street-door knocker, half-lion, half-monkey; and the comparison might be extended to his whole character and conversation. He had stood still, while every thing else had been moving. He never originated a conversation, or started a new idea; but if any commonplace topic were broached, or, to pursue the comparison, if any body *lifted him up*, he would hammer away with surprising rapidity. He had the tic douloreux occasionally, and then he might be said to be muffled, because he

did not make quite as much noise as at other times, when he would go on prosing, rat-tat-tat the same thing over and over again. He had never been married, but he was still on the look-out for a wife with money. He had a life interest worth about 300*l.* a year—he was exceedingly vain, and inordinately selfish. He had acquired the reputation of being the very pink of politeness; and he walked round the park, and up Regent-street, every day.

This respectable personage had made up his mind to render himself exceedingly agreeable to Mrs. Maplesone—indeed, the desire of being as amiable as possible, extended itself to the whole party; Mrs. Tibbs having considered it an admirable little bit of management to represent to the gentlemen that she had *some* reason to believe the ladies were fortunes, and to hint to the ladies, that all the gentlemen were "eligible." A little flirtation, she thought, might keep her house full, without leading to any other result. Mrs. Maplesone was an enterprising widow of about fifty; shrewd, scheming, and good-looking. She was amiably anxious on behalf of her daughters, in proof whereof she used to remark, that she would

have no objection to marry again, if it would benefit her dear girls—she could have no other motive. The "dear girls" themselves were not at all insensible to the merits "of a good establishment." One of them was twenty-five, the other three years younger. They had been at different watering places for four seasons; they had gambled at libraries, read books in balconies, sold at fancy fairs, danced at assemblies, talked sentiment—in short, they had done all that industrious girls could do—and all to no purpose.

"What a magnificent dresser Mr. Simpson is!" whispered Matilda Maplesone to her sister Julia.

"Splendid!" returned the youngest. The magnificent individual alluded to, wore a sort of maroon-coloured dress coat, with a velvet collar and cuffs of the same tint—very like that which usually invests the form of the distinguished unknown who condescends to play the "swell" in the pantomime at "Richardson's Show."

"What whiskers!" said Miss Julia.

"Charming!" responded her sister; "and what hair!" His hair was like a wig, and dis-

tinguished by that insinuating wave which graces the shining locks of those *chef-d'œuvres* of perruquerian art, surmounting the waxen images in Bartellot's window, in Regent-street; and his whiskers, meeting beneath his chin, seemed strings wherewith to tie it on, ere science had rendered them unnecessary by her patent invisible springs.

"Dinner's on the table, ma'am, if you please," said the boy, who now appeared for the first time, in a revived black coat of his master's.

"Oh! Mr. Calton, will you lead Mrs. Maplesone?—Thank you." Mr. Simpson offered his arm to Miss Julia, Mr. Septimus Hicks escorted the lovely Matilda, and the procession proceeded to the dining-room. Mr. Tibbs was introduced, and Mr. Tibbs bobbed up and down to the three ladies like a figure in a Dutch clock, with a powerful spring in the middle of his body, and then dived rapidly into his seat at the bottom of the table, delighted to screen himself behind a soup tureen, which he could just see over, and that was all. The boarders were seated, a lady and gentleman alternately, like the layers of bread and meat in a sandwich; and then Mrs. Tibbs directed James to take off

the covers. Salmon, lobster-sauce, giblet-soup, and the usual accompaniments were *dis*-covered: potatoes like petrifactions, and bits of toasted bread, the shape and size of blank dice.

"Soup for Mrs. Maplesone, my dear," said the bustling Mrs. Tibbs. She always called her husband "my dear" before company. Tibbs, who had been eating his bread, and calculating how long it would be, before he should get any fish, helped the soup in a hurry, made a small island on the table-cloth, and put his glass upon it, to hide it from his wife.

"Miss Julia, shall I assist you to some fish?"

"If you please — very little—oh! plenty, thank you" (a bit about the size of a walnut put upon the plate).

"Julia is a *very* little eater," said Mrs. Maplesone to Mr. Calton.

The knocker gave a single rap. He was busy eating the fish with his eyes; so he only ejaculated, "Ah!"

"My dear," said Mrs. Tibbs, to her spouse, after every one else had been helped, "What do *you* take?" The inquiry was accompanied

with a look intimating thas he musn't say fish, because there was not much left. Tibbs thought the frown referred to the island on the table-cloth; he therefore coolly replied, "Why— I'll take a little—fish, I think."

"Did you say fish, my dear?" (another frown.)

"Yes, dear," replied the villain, with an expression of acute hunger depicted in his countenance. The tears almost started to Mrs. Tibbs's eyes, as she helped her "wretch of a husband," as she inwardly called him, to the last eatable bit of salmon on the dish.

"James, take this to your master, and take away your master's knife."—This was deliberate revenge, as Tibbs never could eat fish without one. He was, however, constrained to chase small particles of salmon round and round his plate, with a piece of bread and a fork, occasionally securing a bit; the number of successful attempts being about one in seventeen.

"Take away, James," said Mrs. Tibbs, just as Tibbs had swallowed the fourth mouthful —and away went the plates like lightning.

"I'll take a bit of bread, James," said the poor "*master* of the house," more hungry than ever.

"Never mind your master now, James," said Mrs. Tibbs, "see about the meat."—This was conveyed in the tone in which ladies usually give admonitions to servants in company, that is to say, a low one; but which, like a stage whisper, from its peculiar emphasis, is most distinctly heard by every body present.

A pause ensued before the table was replenished—a sort of parenthesis, in which Mr. Simpson, Mr. Calton, and Mr. Hicks, produced respectively a bottle of sauterne, bucellas, and sherry, and took wine with every body—except Tibbs: no one ever thought of him.

Between the fish and an intimated sirloin there was a prolonged interval.

Here was an opportunity for Mr. Hicks. He could not resist the singularly appropriate quotation:—

"But beef is rare within these oxless isles;
Goats' flesh there is, no doubt, and kid, and mutton,
And, when a holiday upon them smiles,
A joint their barbarous spits they put on."

"Very ungentlemanly behaviour," thought little Mrs. Tibbs, "to talk in that way."

"Ah," said Mr. Calton, filling his glass, "Tom Moore is my poet."

"And mine," said Mrs. Maplesone.

"And mine," said Miss Julia.

"And mine," added Mr. Simpson.

"Look at his compositions," resumed the knocker.

"To be sure," said Simpson, with confidence.

"Look at Don Juan," replied Mr. Septimus Hicks.

"Julia's letter," suggested Miss Matilda.

"Can any thing be grander than the Fire Worshippers?" inquired Miss Julia.

"To be sure," said Simpson.

"Or Paradise and the Peri," said the old beau.

"Yes; or Paradise and the Peer," repeated the deeply-read Simpson, who thought he was getting through it capitally.

"It's all very well," replied Mr. Septimus Hicks, who, as we have before hinted, had never read any thing but Don Juan. "Where will you find any thing finer, than the description of the siege, at the commencement of the seventh canto?"

"Talking of a siege, Sir," said Tibbs, with a mouthful of bread,—"when I was in the volun-

teer corps, in eighteen hundred and six, our commanding officer was Sir Charles Rampart; and one day, when we were exercising on the ground on which the London University now stands, he says, says he, 'Tibbs (calling me from the ranks) Tibbs ——'"

"Tell your master, James," interrupted Mrs. Tibbs, in an awfully distinct tone, "tell your master if he *won't* carve those fowls, to send them to me." The discomfited volunteer instantly set to work, and carved the fowls almost as expeditiously as his wife operated on the haunch of mutton. Whether he ever finished his story, is not exactly known.

As the ice was now broken, and the new inmates more at home, every member of the company felt more at ease. Tibbs himself most certainly did, because he went to sleep immediately after dinner. Mr. Hicks and the ladies discoursed most eloquently about poetry, and the theatres, and Lord Chesterfield's Letters; and Mr. Calton followed up what every body said, with continuous double knocks. Mrs. Tibbs highly approved of every observation that fell from Mrs. Maplesone; and as Mr. Simpson sat with a smile upon his face and said "Yes,"

or "Certainly," at intervals of about four minutes each, he received full credit for understanding what was going forward. The gentlemen rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room, very shortly after they had left the dining-parlour. Mrs. Maplesone and Mr. Calton played cribbage, and the "young people" amused themselves with music and conversation. The Miss Maplesones sang the most fascinating duets, and accompanied themselves on guitars, ornamented with bits of ethereal blue ribbon. Mr. Simpson put on a pink waistcoat, and said he was in raptures; and Mr. Hicks felt in the seventh heaven of poetry, or the seventh canto of Don Juan—it was the same thing to him. Mrs. Tibbs was quite charmed with the new comers, and Mr. Tibbs spent the evening in his usual way— he went to sleep, and woke up, and went to sleep again, and woke at supper-time.

* * * * *

We are not about to adopt the licence of novel-writers, and to let "years roll on;" but we will take the liberty of requesting the reader to suppose that six months have elapsed since the dinner we have just described, and that Mrs. Tibbs's boarders have, during that period,

sang, and danced, and gone to theatres and exhibitions together, as ladies and gentlemen, wherever they board, often do; and we will beg them, the period we have mentioned having elapsed, to imagine further, that Mr. Septimus Hicks received, in his own bed-room (a front attic), at an early hour one morning, a note from Mr. Calton, requesting the favour of seeing him, as soon as convenient to himself, in his (Calton's) dressing-room, on the second floor back.

"Tell Mr. Calton I'll come down directly," said Mr. Septimus to the boy. "Stop—is Mr. Calton unwell?" inquired the excited walker of hospitals, as he put on a bed-furniture-looking dressing gown.

"Not as I know on, sir," replied the boy. "Please, sir, he looked rather rum, as it might be."

"Ah, that's no proof of his being ill," returned Hicks, unconsciously. "Very well: I'll be down directly." Down stairs ran the boy with the message, and down went the excited Hicks himself, almost as soon as the message was delivered. "Tap, tap." "Come in."—Door opens, and discovers Mr. Calton sitting in an easy chair, and looking more like a knocker

than ever. Mutual shakes of the hand exchanged, and Mr. Septimus Hicks motioned to a seat. A short pause. Mr. Hicks coughed, and Mr. Calton took a pinch of snuff. It was just one of those interviews where neither party knows what to say. Mr. Septimus Hicks broke silence.

"I received a note—" he said, very tremulously, in a voice like a Punch with a cold.

"Yes," returned the other, "you did."

"Exactly."

"Yes."

Now, although this dialogue must have been satisfactory, both gentlemen felt there was something more important to be said; and so they did as many in such a situation would have done —they looked at the table with a most determined aspect. The conversation had been opened, however, and Mr. Calton made up his mind to continue it, with a regular double knock. He always spoke very pompously.

"Hicks," said he, "I have sent for you in consequence of certain arrangements which are pending in this house, connected with a marriage."

"With a marriage!" gasped Hicks, com-

pared with whose expression of countenance, Hamlet's, when he sees his father's ghost, is pleasing and composed.

"With a marriage!" returned the knocker. "I have sent for you, to prove the great confidence I can repose in you."

"And will you betray me?" eagerly inquired Hicks, who in his alarm had even forgotten to quote.

"*I* betray *you!* Won't *you* betray *me?*"

"Never: no one shall know to my dying day that you had a hand in the business," responded the agitated Hicks, with an inflamed countenance, and his hair standing on end as if he were on the stool of an electrifying machine in full operation.

"People must know that, some time or other, —within a year, I imagine," said Mr. Calton, with an air of great self-complacency—"We *may* have a family, you know."

"*We!*—That won't affect you, surely?"

"The devil it won't!"

"No! how can it?" said the bewildered Hicks. Calton was too much inwrapped in the contemplation of happiness to see the equivoque between Hicks and himself; and throw-

ing himself back in his chair, "Oh, Matilda!" sighed the antique beau, in a lack-a-daysical voice, and applying his right hand a little to the left of the fourth button of his waistcoat, counting from the bottom. This was meant to be pathetic—"Oh, Matilda!"

"What Matilda?" inquired Hicks, starting up.

"Matilda Maplesone," responded the other, doing the same.

"I marry her to-morrow morning," said Hicks, furiously.

"It's false," rejoined his companion: "I marry her!"

"You marry her!"

"I marry her!"

"You marry Matilda Maplesone?"

"Matilda Maplesone."

"*Miss* Maplesone marry *you?*"

"Miss Maplesone? No: Mrs. Maplesone."

"Good God!" said Hicks, falling into his chair, like Warde in Gustavus: "You marry the mother, and I the daughter!"

"Most extraordinary circumstance!" replied Mr. Calton, "and rather inconvenient too; for the fact is, that owing to Matilda's wishing to

keep her intention secret from her daughters until the ceremony has taken place, she does'nt like applying to any of her friends to give her away. I entertain an objection to making the affair known to my acquaintance just now; and the consequence is, that I sent to you, to know whether you'd oblige me by acting as father."

"I should have been most happy, I assure you," said Hicks, in a tone of condolence; "but you see I shall be acting as bridegroom. One character is frequently a consequence of the other; but it is not usual to act in both at the same time. There's Simpson—I have no doubt he'll do it for you."

"I don't like to ask him," replied Calton; "he's such a donkey."

Mr. Septimus Hicks looked up at the ceiling and down at the floor; at last an idea struck him—"Let the man of the house, Tibbs, be the father," he suggested; and then he quoted, as peculiarly applicable to Tibbs and the pair:—

> "Oh, Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
> 'Tis—tis her father's—fixed upon the pair."

"The idea has struck me already," said Mr.

Calton: "but, you see, Matilda, for what reason I know not, is very anxious that Mrs. Tibbs should know nothing about it till it's all over. It's a natural delicacy, after all, you know."

"He's the best-natured little man in existence, if you manage him properly," said Mr. Septimus Hicks. "Tell him not to mention it to his wife, and assure him she won't mind it, and he'll do it directly. My marriage is to be a secret one, on account of the mother and my father: therefore he must be enjoined to secrecy."

A small double knock, like a presumptuous single one, was that instant heard at the street-door. It was Tibbs; it could be no one else, for no one else occupied five minutes in rubbing their shoes. He had been out to pay the baker's bill.

"Mr. Tibbs," called out Mr. Calton in a very bland tone, looking over the banisters.

"Sir!" replied he of the dirty face.

"Will you have the kindness to step up stairs for a moment?"

"Certainly, sir," said Tibbs, delighted to be taken notice of. The bedroom-door was carefully closed, and Tibbs, having put his hat on

George Cruikshank

the floor (as all timid men do,) and been accommodated with a seat, looked as astounded as if he were suddenly summoned before the familiars of the Inquisition.

"A rather unpleasant occurrence, Mr. Tibbs," said Calton, in a very portentous manner, "obliges me to consult you, and to beg you will not communicate what I am about to say, to your wife."

Tibbs acquiesced, wondering in his own mind what the deuce the other could have done, and imagining that at least he must have broken the best decanters.

Mr. Calton resumed: "I am placed, Mr. Tibbs, in rather an unpleasant situation."

Tibbs looked at Mr. Septimus Hicks, as if he thought his being in the immediate vicinity of his fellow-boarder constituted the unpleasantness of his situation; but as he did not exactly know what to say, he merely ejaculated the monsyllable "Lor!"

"Now," continued the knocker, "let me beg you will exhibit no manifestations of surprise which may be overheard by the domestics, when I tell you—command your feelings of astonishment—that two inmates of this house intend to

be married to-morrow morning,"—and he drew back his chair several feet, to perceive the effect of the unlooked-for announcement.

If Tibbs had rushed from the room, staggered down stairs, and fainted in the passage—if he had instantaneously jumped out of the window into the mews behind the house, in an agony of surprise—his behaviour would have been much less inexplicable to Mr. Calton than it was, when he put his hands into his inexpressible-pockets, and said, with a half-chuckle, "Just so."

"You are not surprised, Mr. Tibbs?" inquired Mr. Calton.

"God bless you, no, sir," returned Tibbs; "after all, it's very natural. When two young people get together, you know——"

"Certainly, certainly," said Calton, with an indescribable air of self-satisfaction.

"You don't think it's at all an out-of-the-way affair then?" asked Mr. Septimus Hicks, who had watched the countenance of Tibbs in mute astonishment.

"No, sir," replied Tibbs; "I was just the same at his age." He actually smiled when he said this.

"How devilish well I must carry my years!" thought the delighted old beau, knowing he was at least ten years older than Tibbs at that moment.

"Well, then, to come to the point at once," he continued, "I have to ask you, whether you will object to act as father on the occasion?"

"Certainly not," replied Tibbs; still without evincing an atom of surprise.

"You will not?"

"Decidedly not," reiterated Tibbs, who appeared as calm as a pot of porter with the head off.

Mr. Calton seized the hand of the petticoat-governed little man, and vowed eternal friendship from that hour. Hicks, who was all admiration and surprise, did the same.

"Now, confess," asked Mr. Calton of Tibbs, as he picked up his hat, "were you not a little surprised?"

"I b'live you!" replied that illustrious person, holding up one hand; "I b'lieve you! when I first heard of it."

"So sudden," said Septimus Hicks.

"So strange to ask *me*, you know," said Tibbs.

"So damned odd altogether," said the superannuated love-maker; and then all three laughed.

"I say," said Tibbs, shutting the door which he had previously opened; and giving full vent to a hitherto corked-up giggle, "what bothers me is, what *will* his father say?"

Mr. Septimus Hicks looked at Mr. Calton.

"Yes; but the best of it is," said the latter, giggling in his turn, "I haven't got a father—he! he! he!"

"*You* hav'nt got a father. No; but *he* has," said Tibbs.

"*Who* has?" inquired Septimus Hicks, almost rabid.

"Why *him*."

"Him, who? Do you know my secret? Do you mean me?"

"You! No; you know who I mean," returned Tibbs, with a knowing wink.

"For Heaven's sake whom *do* you mean," inquired Mr. Calton, who, like Septimus Hicks, was all but out of his senses at the strange confusion.

"Why, Mr. Simpson, of course," replied Tibbs; "who else could I mean?"

"I see it all," said the Byron-quoter; "Simpson marries Julia Maplesone to-morrow morning!"

"Undoubtedly," replied Tibbs, thoroughly satisfied; "of course he does."

It would require the pencil of Hogarth to illustrate—our feeble pen is inadequate to describe—the expression which the countenances of Mr. Calton and Mr. Septimus Hicks respectively assumed at this unexpected announcement. Equally impossible is it to describe, although it is much easier for our lady readers to imagine, what arts the three ladies could have used, so completely to entangle their separate partners. Whatever they were, however, they were successful. The mother was perfectly aware of the intended marriage of both daughters; and the young ladies were equally acquainted with the intention of their estimable parent. They agreed, however, that it would have a much better appearance if each feigned ignorance of the other's engagement; and it was equally desirable that all the marriages should take place on the same day, to prevent the dis-

covery of one clandestine alliance, operating prejudicially on the others. Hence the mystification of Mr. Calton and Mr. Septimus Hicks, and the pre-engagement of the unwary Tibbs.

On the following morning, Mr. Septimus Hicks was united to Miss Matilda Maplesone. Mr. Simpson also entered into a "holy alliance" with Miss Julia, Tibbs acting as father, "his first appearance in that character." Mr. Calton, not being quite so eager as the two young men, was rather struck by the double discovery; and as he had found some difficulty in getting any one to give the lady away, it occurred to him that the best mode of obviating the inconvenience would be not to take her at all. The lady, however, "appealed," as her counsel said on the trial of the cause, *Maplesone* v. *Calton*, for a breach of promise, "with a broken heart, to the outraged laws of her country." She recovered damages to the amount of 1000*l.*, which the unfortunate knocker was compelled to pay. Mr. Septimus Hicks having walked the hospitals, took it into his head to walk off altogether. His injured wife is at present residing with her mother at Boulogne. Mr. Simpson, having the misfortune to lose his wife

six weeks after marriage, (by her eloping with an officer during his temporary sojourn in the Fleet Prison, in consequence of his inability to discharge her little mantua-maker's bill), and being disinherited by his father, who died soon afterwards, was fortunate enough to obtain a permanent engagement at a fashionable hair-cutter's, hairdressing being a science to which he had frequently directed his attention. In this situation he had necessarily many opportunities of making himself acquainted with the habits and style of thinking, of the exclusive portion of the nobility of this kingdom. To this fortunate circumstance are we indebted for the production of those brilliant efforts of genius, his fashionable novels, which, so long as good taste, unsullied by exaggeration, cant, and maudlin quackery, continues to exist, cannot fail to instruct and amuse the thinking portion of the community.

It only remains to add, that this "complication of disorders" completely deprived poor Mrs. Tibbs of all her inmates, except the one whom it would have afforded her the greatest pleasure to lose--her husband. That wretched little man returned home on the day of the

wedding in a state of partial intoxication ; and under the influence of wine, excitement, and despair, actually dared to brave the anger of his wife. Since this ill-fated hour he has constantly taken his meals in the kitchen, to which apartment it is understood his witticisms will be in future confined : a turn-up bedstead having been conveyed there, by Mrs. Tibbs's order, for his exclusive accommodation. It is very likely that he will be enabled to complete his story of the volunteers in this retirement.

The advertisement has again appeared in the morning papers. Results must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

"Well," said little Mrs. Tibbs to herself, as she sat in the front parlour of the Coram-street mansion one morning, mending the piece of stair-carpet off the first landing; — "well! things have not turned out so badly either, and if I only get a favourable answer to the advertisement, we shall be full again."

Mrs. Tibbs resumed her occupation of making worsted lattice-work in the carpet, anxiously listening to the twopenny postman, who was hammering his way down the street, at the rate of a penny a knock. The house was as quiet as possible. There was only one low sound to be heard—it was the unhappy Tibbs cleaning the gentlemen's boots in the back kitchen, and accompanying himself with a buzzing noise, in wretched mockery of humming a tune.

The postman drew near the house. He paused—so did Mrs. Tibbs—a knock—a bustle —a letter—post paid.

"T. I. presents compt. to I. T. and T. I. begs

To say that i see the advertisement And she will Do Herself the pleasure of calling On you at 12 o'clock to morrow morning.

"T.I. has To apologise to I.T. for the shortness Of the notice But i hope it will not unconvenience you.

"I remain

"yours Truly

"Wednesday evening."

Little Mrs. Tibbs perused the document over and over again; and the more she read it, the more was she confused by the mixture of the first and third person, the substitution of the "I" for the "T. I.," and the transition from the "I. T." to the "you." The writing looked like a skein of thread in a tangle, and the note was ingeniously folded into a perfect square, with the direction squeezed up into the right-hand corner, as if it were ashamed of itself. The back of the epistle was pleasingly ornamented with a large red wafer, which with the addition of divers ink-stains, bore a marvellous resemblance to a black beetle trod upon. One thing, however, was perfectly clear to the perplexed Mrs. Tibbs—Somebody was to call at twelve. The drawing-room was forthwith dusted

for the third time that morning; three or four chairs were pulled out of their places, and a corresponding number of books carefully upset, in order that there might be a due absence of formality. Down went the piece of stair-carpet before noticed, and up ran Mrs. Tibbs "to make herself tidy."

The clock of New Saint Pancras Church struck twelve, and the Foundling, with laudable politeness, did the same ten minutes afterwards. Saint something else struck the quarter, and then there arrived a single lady with a double knock, in a pelisse the colour of the interior of a damson pie; a bonnet of the same, with a regular conservatory of artificial flowers; a white veil, and a green parasol, with a cobweb border.

The visitor (who was very fat and red-faced) was shown into the drawing-room; Mrs. Tibbs presented herself, and the negotiation commenced.

"I called in consequence of an advertizement," said the stranger, in a voice like a man who had been playing a set of Pan's pipes for a fortnight, without leaving off.

"Yes!" said Mrs. Tibbs, rubbing her hands

very slowly, and looking the applicant full in the face—two things she always did on such occasions.

"Money isn't no object whatever to me," said the *lady*, "so much as living in a state of retirement and obtrusion."

Mrs. Tibbs, as a matter of course, acquiesced in such an exceedingly natural desire.

"I am constantly attended by a medical man," resumed the pelisse wearer; "have been a shocking unitarian for some time—have had very little peace since the death of Mr. Bloss."

Mrs. Tibbs looked at the relict of the departed Bloss, and thought he must have had very little peace in his time. Of course she could not say so; so she looked very sympathizing.

"I shall be a good deal of trouble to you," said Mrs. Bloss; "but for that trouble I am willing to pay. I am going through a course of treatment which renders attention necessary. I have one mutton chop in bed at half-past eight, and another at ten, every morning."

Mrs. Tibbs, as in duty bound, expressed the pity she felt for any body placed in such a distressing situation; and the carnivorous Mrs.

Bloss proceeded to arrange the various preliminaries with wonderful dispatch. "Now mind," said that lady, after terms were arranged; "I am to have the second-floor front for my bedroom?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you'll find room for my little servant Agnes?"

"Oh! certainly."

"And I can have one of the cellars in the area, for my bottled porter."

"With the greatest pleasure;—James shall get it ready for you by Saturday."

"And I'll join the company at the breakfast-table on Sunday morning," said Mrs. Bloss. "I shall get up on purpose."

"Very well," returned Mrs. Tibbs, in her most amiable tone; for satisfactory references had been "given and required," and it was quite certain that the new-comer had plenty of money. "It's rather singular," continued Mrs. Tibbs, with what was meant for a most bewitching smile, "that we have a gentleman now with us, who is in a very delicate state of health —a Mr. Gobler.—His apartment is the back drawing-room."

"The next room?" inquired Mrs. Bloss.

"The next room," repeated the hostess.

"How very promiscuous!" ejaculated the widow.

"He hardly ever gets up," said Mrs. Tibbs, in a whisper.

"Lor!" cried Mrs. Bloss, in an equally low tone.

"And when he is up," said Mrs. Tibbs, "we never can persuade him to go to bed again."

"Dear me!" said the astonished Mrs. Bloss, drawing her chair nearer Mrs. Tibbs. "What, is his complaint?"

"Why, the fact is," replied Mrs. Tibbs, with a most communicative air, "he has no stomach whatever."

"No what?" inquired Mrs. Bloss, with a look of the most indescribable alarm.

"No stomach," repeated Mrs. Tibbs, with a shake of the head.

"Lord bless us! what an extraordinary case!" gasped Mrs. Bloss, as if she understood the communication in its literal sense, and was astonished at a gentleman without a stomach finding it necessary to board any where.

"When I say he has no stomach," explained the chatty little Mrs. Tibbs, "I mean that his

digestion is so much impaired, and his interior so deranged, that his stomach is not of the least use to him;—in fact it's rather an inconvenience than otherwise."

"Never heard such a case in my life!" exclaimed Mrs. Bloss. "Why, he's worse than I am."

"Oh, yes!" replied Mrs. Tibbs;—"certainly." She said this with great confidence, for the set of the damson pelisse, satisfactorily proved that Mrs. Bloss, at all events, was not suffering under Mr. Gobler's complaint.

"You have quite incited my curiosity," said Mrs. Bloss, as she rose to depart. "How I long to see him!"

"He generally comes down once a week," replied Mrs. Tibbs; "I dare say you'll see him on Sunday." And with this consolatory promise, Mrs. Bloss was obliged to be contented. She accordingly walked slowly down the stairs, detailing her complaints all the way; and Mrs. Tibbs followed her, uttering an exclamation of compassion at every step. James (who looked very gritty, for he was cleaning the knives) fell up the kitchen-stairs, and opened the street-door; and, after mutual farewells, Mrs. Bloss

slowly departed down the shady side of the street.

It is almost superfluous to say, that the lady whom we have just shown out at the street-door (and whom the two female servants are now inspecting from the second-floor windows) was exceedingly vulgar, ignorant, and selfish. Her deceased better-half had been an eminent cork-cutter, in which capacity he had amassed a decent fortune. He had no relative but his nephew, and no friend but his cook. The former had the insolence one morning to ask for the loan of fifteen pounds, and by way of retaliation he married the latter next day; he made a will immediately afterwards, containing a burst of honest indignation against the aforesaid nephew (who supported himself and two sisters on 100*l.* a year), and a bequest of his whole property to his wife. He felt ill after breakfast, and died after dinner. There is a mantelpiece-looking tablet, in a civic parish church, setting forth his virtues, and deploring his loss. He never dishonoured a bill or gave away a halfpenny!

The relict and sole executrix of this noble-minded man, was an odd mixture of shrewdness and simplicity: liberality and meanness. Bred

up as she had been, she knew no mode of living so agreeable as a boarding-house; and having nothing to do, and nothing to wish for, she naturally imagined she must be very ill—an impression which was most assiduously promoted by her medical attendant, Dr. Wosky, and her handmaid, Agnes, both of whom, doubtless for excellent reasons, encouraged all her extravagant notions.

Since the catastrophe recorded in our last, Mrs. Tibbs had been very shy of young lady boarders. Her present inmates were all lords of the creation, and she availed herself of the opportunity of their assemblage at the dinner-table, to announce the expected arrival of Mrs. Bloss. The gentlemen received the communication with stoical indifference, and Mrs. Tibbs devoted all her energies to prepare for the reception of the valetudinarian. The second-floor front, was scrubbed, and washed, and flannelled, till the wet went through to the drawing-room ceiling. Clean white counterpanes, and curtains, and napkins; water-bottles as clear as crystal, blue jugs, and mahogany furniture, added to the splendour and increased the com-

fort of the apartment. The warming-pan was in constant requisition, and a fire lighted in the room every day. The chattels of Mrs. Bloss were forwarded by instalments. First there came a large hamper of Guinness's stout and an umbrella, then a train of trunks, then a pair of clogs and a bandbox; then an easy-chair with an air-cushion, then a variety of suspicious-looking packages, and—"though last not least"—Mrs. Bloss and Agnes, the latter in a cherry-coloured merino dress, open-work stockings, and shoes with sandals; looking like a disguised Columbine.

The installation of the Duke of Wellington, as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, was nothing, in point of bustle and turmoil, to the installation of Mrs. Bloss in her new quarters. True, there was no bright doctor of civil law to deliver a classical address on the occasion; but there were several other old women present, who spoke quite as much to the purpose, and understood themselves equally well. The chop-eater was so fatigued with the process of removal that she declined leaving her room until the following morning; so a mutton-chop,

pickle, a two-grain calomel pill, a pint bottle of stout, and other medicines, were carried up stairs for her consumption.

"Why, what *do* you think, ma'am?" inquired the inquisitive Agnes of her mistress, after they had been in the house some three hours; "what *do* you think, ma'am? the lady of the house is married."

"Married!" said Mrs. Bloss, taking the pill and a draught of Guinness—"married! Unpossible!"

"She is indeed, ma'am," returned the Columbine; "and her husband, ma'am, lives—he—he—he—lives in the kitchen, ma'am."

"In the kitchen!"

"Yes, ma'am: and he—he—he—the housemaid says, he never goes into the parlour except on Sundays, and that Mrs. Tibbs makes him clean the gentlemen's boots, and that he cleans the windows, too, sometimes; and that one morning early, when he was on the front balcony cleaning the drawing-room windows, he called out to a gentleman on the opposite side of the way, who used to live here—'Ah! Mr. Calton, sir, how are you?'" Here the at-

tendant laughed, till Mrs. Bloss was in serious apprehension of her chuckling herself into a fit.

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Bloss.

"Yes, and please, ma'am, the servants give him gin-and-water sometimes; and then he cries, and says he hates his wife, and the boarders, and wants to tickle them."

"Tickle the boarders!" exclaimed Mrs. Bloss, seriously alarmed.

"No, ma'am, not the boarders, the servants."

"Oh, is that all!" said Mrs. Bloss, quite satisfied.

"He wanted to kiss me, as I came up the kitchen-stairs, just now," said Agnes, indignantly; "but I gave it him—a little wretch!"

This intelligence was but too true. A long course of snubbing and neglect; his days spent in the kitchen, and his nights in the turn-up bedstead, had completely broken the little spirit that the unfortunate volunteer had ever possessed. He had no one to whom he could detail his injuries but the servants, and they were almost of necessity his chosen confidents. It is no less strange than true, however, that the little weaknesses which he had incurred, most

probably, during his military career, seemed to increase as his comforts diminished. He was actually a sort of journeyman Giovanni in the basement story.

The next morning, being Sunday, breakfast was laid in the front parlour at ten o'clock. Nine was the usual time, but the family always breakfasted an hour later on sabbath. Tibbs enrobed himself in his Sunday costume—a black coat, and exceedingly short, thin trousers, with a very large white waistcoat, white stockings and cravat, and Blucher boots—and mounted to the parlour aforesaid. Nobody had come down, and he amused himself by drinking the contents of the milkpot with a tea-spoon.

A pair of slippers were heard descending the stairs; Tibbs flew to a chair, and a stern-looking man, of about fifty, with very little hair on his head, and "*The Examiner*" in his hand, entered the room.

"Good morning, Mr. Evenson," said Tibbs, very humbly, with something between a nod and a bow.

"How do you, Mr. Tibbs?" replied he of the

slippers, as he sat himself down, and began to read his paper without saying another word.

"Is Mr. Wisbottle in town to-day, do you know, sir?" inquired Tibbs, just for the sake of saying something.

"I should think he was," replied the stern gentleman. "He was whistling 'The Light Guitar,' in the next room to mine, at five o'clock this morning."

"He's very fond of whistling," said Tibbs, with a slight smirk.

"Yes—I an't," was the laconic reply.

Mr. John Evenson was in the receipt of an independent income, arising chiefly from various houses he owned in the different suburbs. He was very morose and discontented. He was a thorough radical, and used to attend a great variety of public meetings, for the express purpose of finding fault with everything that was proposed. Mr. Wisbottle, on the other hand, was a high Tory. He was a clerk in the Woods and Forests Office, which he considered rather an aristocratic employment; he knew the peerage by heart, and could tell you off-hand where any illustrious personage lived. He had a good

set of teeth and a capital tailor. Mr. Evenson looked on all these qualifications with profound contempt; and the consequence was, that the two were always disputing, much to the edification of the rest of the house. It should be added, that, in addition to his partiality for whistling, Mr. Wisbottle had a great idea of his singing powers. There were two other boarders besides the gentleman in the back drawing-room—Mr. Alfred Tomkins, and Mr. Frederick O'Bleary. Mr. Tomkins was a clerk in a wine-house; he was a connoisseur in paintings, and had a wonderful eye for the picturesque. Mr. O'Bleary was an Irishman, recently imported; he was in a perfectly wild state, and had come over to England to be an apothecary, a clerk in a government-office, an actor, a reporter, or any thing else that turned up—he was not particular. He was on familiar terms with two small Irish members, and got franks for every body in the house. Like all Irishmen, when they first come to England, he felt convinced that his intrinsic merits must procure him a high destiny. He wore shepherd's-plaid inexpressibles, and used to look under all the ladies' bonnets as he walked along the streets. His manners and

appearance always forcibly reminded one of Orson.

"Here comes Mr. Wisbottle," said Tibbs; and Mr. Wisbottle forthwith appeared in blue slippers, and a shawl dressing-gown, whistling "*Di piacer.*"

"Good morning, sir," said Tibbs again. It was about the only thing he ever said to any body.

"How are you, Tibbs?" condescendingly replied the amateur; and he walked to the window, and whistled louder than ever.

"Pretty air, that!" said Evenson with a snarl, and without taking his eyes off the paper.

"Glad you like it," replied Wisbottle, highly gratified.

"Don't you think it would sound better, if you whistled it a little louder?" inquired the mastiff.

"No; I don't think it would," rejoined the unconscious Wisbottle.

"I'll tell you what, Wisbottle," said Evenson, who had been bottling up his anger for some hours—"the next time you feel disposed to whistle 'The Light Guitar' at five o'clock in the morning, I'll trouble you to whistle it with

your head out o' window. If you don't, I'll learn the triangle—I will by ——."

The entrance of Mrs. Tibbs (with the keys in a little basket) interrupted the threat, and prevented its conclusion.

Mrs. Tibbs apologized for being down rather late; the bell was rung; James brought up the urn, and received an unlimited order for dry toast and bacon. Tibbs sat down at the bottom of the table, and began eating watercresses like a second Nebuchadnezzar. Mr. O'Bleary appeared, and Mr. Alfred Tomkins. The compliments of the morning were exchanged, and the tea was made.

"God bless me!" exclaimed Tomkins, who had been looking out at the window. "Here—Wisbottle—pray come here: make haste."

Mr. Wisbottle started from table, and every one looked up.

"Do you see," said the connoisseur, placing Wisbottle in the right position—"a little more this way: there—do you see how spendidly the light falls upon the left side of that broken chimney-pot at No. 48?"

"Dear me! I see," replied Wisbottle, in a tone of admiration.

"Never saw an object stand out so beautifully against the clear sky in my life," ejaculated Alfred. Every body (except John Evenson) echoed the sentiment, for Mr. Tomkins had a great character for finding out beauties which no one else could discover—he certainly deserved it.

"I have frequently observed a chimney-pot in College-green, Dublin, which has a much better effect," said the patriotic O'Bleary, who never allowed Ireland to be outdone on any point.

The assertion was received with obvious incredulity, for Mr. Tomkins declared that no other chimney-pot in the United Kingdom, broken or unbroken, could be so beautiful as the one at No. 48.

The room door was suddenly thrown open, and Agnes appeared, leading in Mrs. Bloss, who was dressed in a geranium-coloured muslin gown, and displayed a gold watch of the dimensions of a small tea-cup; a chain like a gilt street-door chain, and a splendid assortment of rings, with stones about the size of half-crowns. A general rush was made for a chair, and a regular introduction took place. Mr. John Evenson made

a slight inclination of the head; Mr. Frederick O'Bleary, Mr. Alfred Tomkins, and Mr. Wisbottle bowed like the mandarins in a grocer's shop; and Tibbs rubbed his hands, and went round in circles. He was observed to close one eye, and to assume a clock-work sort of expression with the other; this has been considered as a wink, and it has been reported that Agnes was its object. We repel the calumny, and challenge contradiction.

Mrs. Tibbs inquired after Mrs. Bloss's health in a low tone. Mrs. Bloss, with a supreme contempt for the memory of Lindley Murray, answered the various questions in a most satisfactory manner; and a pause ensued, during which the eatables disappeared with awful rapidity.

"You must have been very much pleased with the appearance of the ladies going to the drawing-room the other day, Mr O'Bleary?" said Mrs. Tibbs, hoping to start a topic.

"Yes," replied Orson, with a mouthful of toast.

"Never saw any thing like it before, I suppose?" suggested Wisbottle.

"No—except the Lord Lieutenant's levees," replied O'Bleary.

"Are they at all equal to our drawing-rooms?"

"Oh, infinitely superior!"

"'Gad! I don't know," said the aristocratic Wisbottle, "the Dowager Marchioness of Publiccash was most magnificently dressed, and so was the Baron Slappenbachenhausen."

"What was he presented on?" inquired Evenson.

"On his arrival in England."

"I thought so," growled the radical; "you never hear of these fellows being presented on their going away again. They know better than that."

"Unless somebody pervades them with an apintment," said Mrs. Bloss, joining in the conversation in a faint voice.

"Well," said Wisbottle, evading the point, "it's a splendid sight."

"And did it never occur to you," inquired the radical, who never would be quiet—"did it never occur to you, that you pay for these precious ornaments of society?"

"It certainly *has* occurred to me," said Wisbottle, who thought this answer was a poser; "it *has* occurred to me, and I am willing to pay for them."

"Well, and it has occurred to me too," replied John Evenson, "and I an't willing to pay for 'em. Then why should I?—I say, why should I?" continued the politician, laying down the paper, and knocking his knuckles on the table. "There are two great principles—demand—"

"A cup of tea, if you please, dear," interrupted Tibbs.

"And supply—"

"May I trouble you to hand this tea to Mr. Tibbs?" said Mrs. Tibbs, interrupting the argument, and unconsciously illustrating it.

The thread of the orator's discourse was broken He drank his tea and resumed the paper.

"If it's very fine," said Mr. Alfred Tomkins, addressing the company in general, "I shall ride down to Richmond to-day, and come back by the steamer. There are some splendid effects of light and shade on the Thames; the contrast between the blueness of the sky, and the yellow water, is frequently exceedingly beautiful." Mr. Wisbottle hummed, "Flow on, thou shining river."

"We have some splendid steam-vessels in Ireland," said O'Bleary.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Bloss, delighted to find a subject broached, in which she could take part.

"The accommodations are extraordinary," said O'Bleary.

"Extraordinary indeed," returned Mrs. Bloss. "When Mr. Bloss was alive, he was promiscuously obligated to go to Ireland on business. I went with him, and raly the manner in which the ladies and gentlemen were accommodated with berths, is not creditable."

Tibbs, who had been listening to the dialogue looked very aghast, and evinced a strong inclination to ask a question, but was checked by a look from his wife. Mr. Wisbottle laughed, and said Tomkins had made a pun; and Tomkins laughed too, and said he had not.

The remainder of the meal passed off as breakfasts usually do. Conversation flagged, and people played with their tea-spoons. The gentlemen looked out at the window, walked about the room, and when they got near the door, dropped off one by one. Tibbs retired to

the back parlour, by his wife's orders, to check the greengrocer's weekly account; and ultimately Mrs. Tibbs and Mrs. Bloss were left alone together.

"Oh dear!" said the latter, "I feel alarmingly faint; it's very singular." (It certainly was, for she had eaten four pounds of solids that morning.) "By-the-by," said Mrs. Bloss, "I have not seen Mr. what's-his-name yet."

"Mr. Gobler?" suggested Mrs. Tibbs.

"Yes."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Tibbs, "he is a most mysterious person. He has his meals regularly sent up stairs, and sometimes don't leave his room for weeks together."

"I haven't seen or heard nothing of him," repeated Mrs. Bloss,

"I dare say you'll hear him to-night," replied Mrs. Tibbs; "he generally groans a good deal on Sunday evenings."

"I never felt such an interest in any one in my life," ejaculated Mrs. Bloss. A finicking double-knock interrupted the conversation; Doctor Wosky was announced, and duly shown in. He was a little man with a red face, dressed of course in black, with a stiff white necker-

chief. He had a very good practice, and plenty of money, which he had amassed by invariably humouring the worst fancies of all the females of all the families he had ever been introduced into. Mrs. Tibbs offered to retire, but was entreated to stay.

"Well, my dear ma'am, and how are we?" inquired Wosky in a soothing tone.

"Very ill, doctor—very ill," said Mrs. Bloss in a whisper.

"Ah! we must take care of ourselves;—we must, indeed," said the obsequious Wosky, as he felt the pulse of his interesting patient. "How is our appetite?"

Mrs. Bloss shook her head.

"Our friend requires great care," said Wosky, appealing to Mrs. Tibbs, who, of course, assented. "I hope, however, with the blessing of Providence," continued the Doctor, "that we shall be enabled to make her quite stout again." Mrs. Tibbs wondered in her own mind what the patient would be, when she had got quite stout: for she looked like a pincushion on castors already.

"We must take stimulants," said the cunning Wosky—"plenty of nourishment, and, above all, we must keep our nerves quiet; we posi-

tively must not give way to our sensibilities. We must take all we can get," concluded the Doctor as he pocketed his fee, "and we must keep quiet."

"Dear man!" exclaimed Mrs. Bloss, as the Doctor stepped into his carriage.

"Charming creature, indeed—quite a lady's man," said Mrs. Tibbs; and Dr. Wosky rattled away, to make fresh gulls of delicate females, and pocket fresh fees.

As we had occasion in a former paper to describe a dinner at Mrs. Tibbs's, and as one meal went off very like another on all ordinary occasions, we will not fatigue our readers by entering into any other detailed account of the domestic economy of the establishment. We will therefore proceed to events, merely premising that the mysterious tenant of the back drawing-room, was a lazy, selfish, hypochondriac; always complaining and never ill. As his character in many respects closely assimilated to that of Mrs. Bloss, a very warm friendship soon sprung up between them. He was tall, thin, and pale; he always fancied he had got a severe pain, somewhere or other, and his face invariably wore a pinched, screwed-up ex-

pression. He looked like a man who had got his feet in a tub of exceedingly hot water, against his will.

For two or three months after Mrs. Bloss's first appearance in Coram-street, John Evenson was observed to become every day more sarcastic and more ill-natured, and there was a degree of additional importance in his manner, which clearly showed that he fancied he had discovered something, which he only wanted a proper opportunity of divulging. He found it at last.

One evening, the different inmates of the house were assembled in the drawing-room engaged in their ordinary occupations. Mr. Gobler and Mrs. Bloss were sitting at a small card-table near the centre window, playing cribbage; Mr. Wisbottle was describing semicircles on the music-stool, turning over the leaves of a book on the piano, and humming most melodiously; Alfred Tomkins was sitting at the round table with his elbows duly squared. making a pencil sketch of a head considerably larger than his own; O'Bleary was reading Horace, and trying to look as if he understood it; and John Evenson had drawn his chair close

to Mrs. Tibbs's work-table, and was talking to her very earnestly in a low tone.

"I can assure you, Mrs. Tibbs," said the radical, laying his forefinger on the muslin she was at work on, "I can assure you, Mrs. Tibbs, that nothing but the interest I take in your welfare would induce me to make this communication. I repeat, that I fear Wisbottle is endeavouring to gain the affections of that young woman, Agnes, and that he is in the habit of meeting her in the store-room on the first floor, over the leads. From my bedroom, I distinctly heard voices there last night. I opened the door immediately, and crept very softly on to the landing; there I saw Mr. Tibbs, who, it seems, had been disturbed also.—Bless me, Mrs. Tibbs, you change colour!"

"No, no—it's nothing," returned Mrs. T. in a hurried manner; "it's only the heat of the room."

"A flush!" ejaculated Mrs. Bloss from the card-table; "that's good for four."

"If I thought it was Mr. Wisbottle," said Mrs. Tibbs, after a pause, "he should leave this house instantly."

"Go!" said Mrs. Bloss again.

"And if I thought," continued the hostess with a most threatening air, "if I thought he was assisted by Mr. Tibbs"—

"One for his nob!" said Gobler.

"Oh," said Evenson, in a most soothing tone;—he always liked to make mischief—"I should hope Mr. Tibbs was not in any way implicated. He has always appeared to me very harmless."

"I have generally found him so," sobbed poor little Mrs. Tibbs, crying like a watering-pot in full play.

"Hush! hush! pray—Mrs. Tibbs—consider—we shall be observed—pray, don't!" said John Evenson, fearing his whole plan would be interrupted. "We will set the matter at rest with the utmost care, and I shall be most happy to assist you in doing so."

Mrs. Tibbs murmured her thanks.

"When you think every one has retired to rest to-night," said Evenson very pompously, "if you'll meet me, without a light, just outside my bedroom-door, by the staircase-window, I think we can ascertain who the parties really are, and you will afterwards be enabled to proceed as you think proper."

Mrs. Tibbs was easily persuaded; her curiosity was excited, her jealousy was roused, and the arrangement was forthwith made. She resumed her work, and John Evenson walked up and down the room with his hands in his pockets, looking as if nothing had happened. The game of cribbage was over, and conversation began again.

"Well, Mr. O'Bleary," said the humming-top, turning round on his pivot, and facing the company, "what did you think of Vauxhall the other night?"

"Oh, it's very fair," replied Orson, who had been enthusiastically delighted with the whole exhibition.

"Never saw any thing like that Captain Ross's set-out—eh?"

"No," returned the patriot with his usual reservation—"except in Dublin."

"I saw the Count de Canky and Captain Fitzthompson in the Gardens," said Wisbottle; "they appeared much delighted."

"Then it must be beautiful!" snarled Evenson.

"I think the white bears is partickerlerly well done," suggested Mrs. Bloss. "In their

shaggy white coats, they look just like Polar bears—don't you think they do, Mr. Evenson?"

"I think they look a great deal more like omnibus cads on all fours," replied the discontented one.

"Upon the whole, I should have liked our evening very well," gasped Gobler; "only I caught a desperate cold, which increased my pain dreadfully. I was obliged to have several shower-baths, before I could leave my room."

"Capital things those shower baths!" ejaculated Wisbottle.

"Excellent!" said Tomkins.

"Delightful!" chimed in, O'Bleary. (He had seen one, once, outside a tinman's.)

"Disgusting machines!" rejoined Evenson, who extended his dislike to almost every created object, masculine, feminine, or neuter.

"Disgusting, Mr. Evenson!" said Gobler, in a tone of strong indignation.—"Disgusting! Look at their utility - consider how many lives they've saved by promoting perspiration."

"Promoting perspiration, indeed," growled John Evenson, stopping short in his walk across the large squares in the pattern of the carpet—"I was ass enough to be persuaded some time

ago to have one in my bedroom. 'Gad, I was in it once, and it effectually cured *me* certainly, for the mere sight of it threw me into a profuse perspiration for six months afterwards."

A general titter followed this announcement, and before it had subsided, James brought up "the tray," containing the remains of a leg of lamb which had made its *début* at dinner: bread, cheese, an atom of butter in a forest of parsley, one pickled walnut, and the third of another, and so forth. The boy disappeared, and returned again with another tray, containing glasses and jugs of hot and cold water. The gentlemen brought in their spirit bottles; the housemaid placed divers brass bedroom candlesticks under the card-table, and the servants retired for the night.

Chairs were drawn round the table, and the conversation proceeded in the customary manner. John Evenson, who never eat supper, lolled on the sofa, and amused himself by contradicting every body. O'Bleary eat as much as he could conveniently carry, and Mrs. Tibbs felt a due degree of indignation thereat; Mr. Gobler and Mrs. Bloss conversed most affectionately on the subject of pill taking, and other

innocent amusements; and Tomkins and Wisbottle "got into an argument"—that is to say, they both talked very loudly and vehemently, each flattering himself that he had got some advantage about something, and neither of them having more than a very indistinct idea of what they were talking about. An hour or two passed away, and the boarders and the brass candlesticks retired in pairs to their respective bedrooms. John Evenson pulled off his boots, locked his door, and determined to sit up until Mr. Gobler had retired. He always sat in the drawing-room about an hour after every body else had left it, taking medicine, and groaning.

Great Coram-street was hushed into a state of the most profound repose: it was nearly two o'clock. A hackney-coach now and then rumbled slowly by, and occasionally some stray lawyer's clerk on his way home to Somers Town, struck his iron-heel on the top of the coal-cellar with a noise resembling the click of a smoke-jack. A low, monotonous, gushing sound was heard, which added considerably to the romantic dreariness of the scene. It was the water "coming in" at No. 11.

"He must be asleep by this time," said John

Evenson to himself, after waiting with exemplary patience for nearly an hour after Mr. Gobler had left the drawing-room. He listened for a few moments; the house was perfectly quiet; he extinguished his rushlight, and opened his bedroom-door. The staircase was so dark that it was impossible to see any thing.

"S—s—s!" whispered the mischief-maker, making a noise like the first indication a catherine-wheel gives, of the probability of its going off.

"Hush!" whispered somebody else.

"Is that you, Mrs. Tibbs?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where?"

"Here;" and the misty outline of Mrs. Tibbs appeared at the staircase-window, like the ghost of Queen Anne in the tent scene in Richard.

"This way, Mrs. Tibbs," whispered the delighted busybody: "give me your hand—there. Whoever these people are, they are in the store-room now, for I have been looking down from my window, and I could see that they accidentally upset their candlestick, and are now in darkness. You have no shoes on, have you?

"No," said little Mrs. Tibbs, who could hardly speak for trembling.

"Well; I have taken my boots off, so we can go down close to the store-room-door and listen over the banisters," continued Evenson; and down stairs they both crept accordingly, every board creaking like a patent mangle on a Saturday afternoon.

"It's Wisbottle and somebody I'll swear," exclaimed the radical in an energetic whisper, when they had listened for a few moments.

"Hush—pray let's hear what they say," exclaimed Mrs. Tibbs, the gratification of whose curiosity was now paramount to every other consideration.

"Ah! if I could but believe you," said a female voice coquettishly, "I'd be bound to settle my missis for life."

"What does she say?" inquired Mr. Evenson, who was not quite so well situated as his companion.

"She says she'll settle her missis's life," replied Mrs. Tibbs. "The wretch! they're plotting murder."

"I know you want money," continued the voice, which belonged to Agnes; "and if you'd

secure me the five hundred pounds, I warrant she should take fire soon enough."

"What's that?" inquired Evenson again. He could just hear enough, to want to hear more.

"I think she says she'll set the house on fire," replied the affrighted Mrs. Tibbs. "Thank God I'm insured in the Phœnix!"

"The moment I have secured your mistress, my dear," said a man's voice in a strong Irish brogue, "you may depend on having the money."

"Bless my soul, it's Mr. O'Bleary!" exclaimed Mrs. Tibbs in a parenthesis.

"The villain!" said the indignant Mr. Evenson.

"The first thing to be done," continued the Hibernian, "is to poison Mr. Gobler's mind."

"Oh, certainly!" returned Agnes, with the utmost coolness.

"What's that?" inquired Evenson again, in an agony of curiosity and a whisper.

"He says she's to mind and poison Mr. Gobler," replied Mrs. Tibbs, perfectly aghast at this awful sacrifice of human life.

"And in regard to Mrs. Tibbs," continued O'Bleary.—Mrs. Tibbs shuddered.

"Hush!" exclaimed Agnes, in a tone of the greatest alarm, just as Mrs. Tibbs was on the extreme verge of a fainting fit. "Hush!"

"Hush!" exclaimed Evenson, at the same moment to Mrs. Tibbs.

"There's somebody coming *up* stairs," said Agnes to O'Bleary.

"There's somebody coming *down* stairs," whispered Evenson to Mrs. Tibbs.

"Go into the parlour, sir," said Agnes to her companion. "You'll get there, before whoever it is, gets to the top of the kitchen-stairs."

"The drawing-room, Mrs. Tibbs!" whispered the astonished Evenson to his equally astonished companion; and for the drawing-room they both made, plainly hearing the rustling of two persons coming down stairs, and one coming up.

"What can it be?" exclaimed Mrs. Tibbs. "It's like a dream. I wouldn't be found in this situation for the world."

"Nor I," returned Evenson, who could never bear a joke at his own expense. "Hush! here they are at the door."

"What fun!" whispered one of the new comers.—It was Wisbottle.

"Glorious!" replied his companion, in an equally low tone. This was Alfred Tomkins. "Who would have thought it?"

"I told you so," said Wisbottle, in a most knowing whisper. "Lord bless you, he has paid her most extraordinary attention for the last two months. I saw 'em when I was sitting at the piano to-night."

"Well, do you know I didn't notice it?" interrupted Tomkins.

"Not notice it!" continued Wisbottle. "Bless you. I saw him whispering to her, and she crying; and then I'll swear I heard him say something about to-night when we were all in bed."

"They're talking of *us*," exclaimed the agonized Mrs. Tibbs, as the painful suspicion, and a sense of their situation, flashed upon her mind.

"I know it—I know it," replied Evenson, with a melancholy consciousness that there was no mode of escape.

"What's to be done? we cannot both stop

here," ejaculated Mrs. Tibbs, in a state of partial derangement.

"I'll get up the chimney," replied Evenson, who really meant what he said.

"You can't," said Mrs. Tibbs, in despair. "You can't—it's a register stove."

"Hush!" repeated John Evenson.

"Hush—hush!" cried somebody down stairs.

"What a d—d hushing!" said Alfred Tomkins, who began to get rather bewildered.

"There they are!" exclaimed the sapient Wisbottle, as a rustling noise was heard in the store-room.

"Hark!" whispered both the young men.

"Hark!" repeated Mrs. Tibbs and Evenson.

"Let me alone, sir," said a female voice in the store-room.

"Oh, Hagnes!" cried another voice, which clearly belonged to Tibbs, for nobody else ever owned one like it. "Oh, Hagnes—lovely creature!"

"Be quiet, sir," (a bounce.)

"Hag—"

"Be quiet, sir—I am ashamed of you. Think of your wife, Mr. Tibbs. Be quiet, sir."

"My wife!" exclaimed the valorous Tibbs, who was clearly under the influence of gin-and-water, and a misplaced attachment; "I ate her! Oh, Hagnes! when I was in the volunteer corps, in eighteen hundred and—"

"I declare I'll scream. Be quiet, sir, will you?" (Another bounce, and a scuffle.)

"What's that?" exclaimed Tibbs, with a start.

"What's what?" said Agnes, stopping short.

"Why, that!"

"Ah! you have done it nicely now, sir," sobbed the frightened Agnes, as a tapping was heard at Mrs. Tibbs's bedroom-door, which would have beaten any twelve woodpeckers hollow.

"Mrs. Tibbs! Mrs. Tibbs!" called out Mrs. Bloss. "Mrs. Tibbs, pray get up." (Here the imitation of a woodpecker was resumed with tenfold violence.)

"O dear—dear!" exclaimed the wretched partner of the depraved Tibbs. "She's knocking at my door. We must be discovered. What will they think?"

"Mrs. Tibbs! Mrs. Tibbs!" screamed the woodpecker again.

"What's the matter?" shouted Gobler, bursting out of the back drawing-room, like the dragon at Astley's—only without the portable gas in his countenance.

"Oh, Mr. Gobler!" cried Mrs. Bloss, with a proper approximation to hysterics; "I think the house is on fire, or else there's thieves in it. I have heard the most dreadful noises."

"The devil you have!" shouted Gobler again, bouncing back into his den, in happy imitation of the aforesaid dragon, and returning immediately with a lighted candle. "Why, what's this? Wisbottle! Tomkins! O'Bleary! Agnes! What the deuce, all up and dressed?"

"Astonishing!" said Mrs. Bloss, who had run down stairs, and taken Mr. Gobler's arm.

"Call Mrs. Tibbs directly, somebody," said Gobler, turning into the front drawing-room.

"What! Mrs. Tibbs and Mr. Evenson!!"

"Mrs. Tibbs and Mr. Evenson!" repeated every body, as that unhappy pair were discovered, Mrs. Tibbs seated in an arm-chair by the fireplace, and Mr. Evenson standing by her side.

We must leave the scene that ensued, to the reader's imagination. We could tell how Mrs.

Tibbs forthwith fainted away, and how it required the united strength of Mr. Wisbottle and Mr. Alfred Tomkins to hold her in her chair; how Mr. Evenson explained, and how his explanation was evidently disbelieved—how Agnes repelled the accusations of Mrs. Tibbs, by proving that she was negotiating with Mr. O'Bleary, to influence her mistress's affections in his behalf; and how Mr. Gobler threw a damp counterpane on the hopes of Mr. O'Bleary by avowing that he (Gobler) had already proposed to, and been accepted by, Mrs. Bloss; how Agnes was discharged from that lady's service; how Mr. O'Bleary discharged himself from Mrs. Tibbs's house, without going through the form of previously discharging his bill; and how that disappointed young gentleman, rails against England and the English, and vows there is no virtue or fine feeling extant, "except in Ireland." We repeat that we *could* tell all this, but we love to exercise our self-denial, and we therefore prefer leaving it to be imagined.

The lady whom we have hitherto described as Mrs. Bloss, is no more. Mrs. Gobler exists: Mrs. Bloss has left us for ever. In a secluded retreat in Newington Butts, far—far

removed from the noisy strife of that great boarding-house, the world, the enviable Gobler and his pleasing wife revel in retirement: happy in their complaints, their table, and their medicine; wafted through life by the grateful prayers of all the purveyors of animal food within three miles round.

We would willingly stop here, but we have a painful duty imposed upon us, which we must discharge. Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs have separated by mutual consent, Mrs. Tibbs receiving one moiety of the 43*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.*, which we before stated to be the amount of her husband's annual income, and Mr. Tibbs the other. He is spending the evening of his days in retirement, and he is spending also, annually, that small but honourable independence. He resides among the original settlers at Walworth, and it has been stated, on unquestionable authority, that the conclusion of the volunteer story has been heard in a small tavern in that respectable neighbourhood.

The unfortunate Mrs. Tibbs has determined to dispose of the whole of her furniture by public auction, and to retire from a residence in which she has suffered so much. Mr. Robins

has been applied to, to conduct the sale, and the transcendant abilities of the literary gentleman connected with his establishment, are now devoted to the task of drawing up the preliminary advertisement. It is to contain, among a variety of brilliant matter, seventy-eight words in large capitals, and six *original* quotations in inverted commas.

We fear Mrs. Tibbs's determination is irrevocable. Should she, however, be induced to rescind it, we may become once again her faithful biographer.

Hackney-Coach Stands.

We maintain that hackney-coaches—properly so-called—belong solely to the metropolis. We may be told, that there are hackney-coach stands in Edinburgh; and not to go quite so far for a contradiction to our position, we may be reminded that Liverpool, Manchester "and other large towns" (as the Parliamentary phrase goes), have *their* hackney-coach stands. We readily concede to these places, the possession of certain vehicles, which may look almost as dirty, and even go almost as slowly, as London hackney-coaches: but that they have the slightest claim to compete with the metropolis, either in point of stands, drivers, or cattle, we indignantly deny.

Take a regular, ponderous, ricketty, London hackney-coach of the old school, and let any

man have the boldness to assert, if he can, that he ever beheld any object on the face of the earth which at all resembled it—unless indeed, it were another hackney-coach of the same date. We have recently observed on certain stands—and we say it with deep regret—rather dapper-green chariots, and coaches of polished yellow, with four wheels of the same colour as the coach, whereas it is perfectly notorious to every one who has studied the subject, that every wheel ought to be of a different colour,and a different size. These are innovations, and, like other mis-called improvements, awful signs of the restlessness of the public mind, and the little respect paid to our time-honoured institutions. Why should hackney-coaches be clean? — our ancestors found them dirty, and left them so. Why should we, with a feverish wish to "keep moving," desire to roll along at the rate of six miles an hour, while they were content to rumble over the stones at four? These are solemn considerations. Hackney-coaches are part and parcel of the law of the land—they were settled by the Legislature plated and numbered by the wisdom of Parliament.

Then why have they been swamped by cabs and omnibuses?—or why should people be allowed to ride quickly for eightpence a mile, after Parliament had come to the solemn decision that they should pay a shilling a mile for riding slowly? We pause for a reply;—and, having no chance of getting one, begin a fresh paragraph.

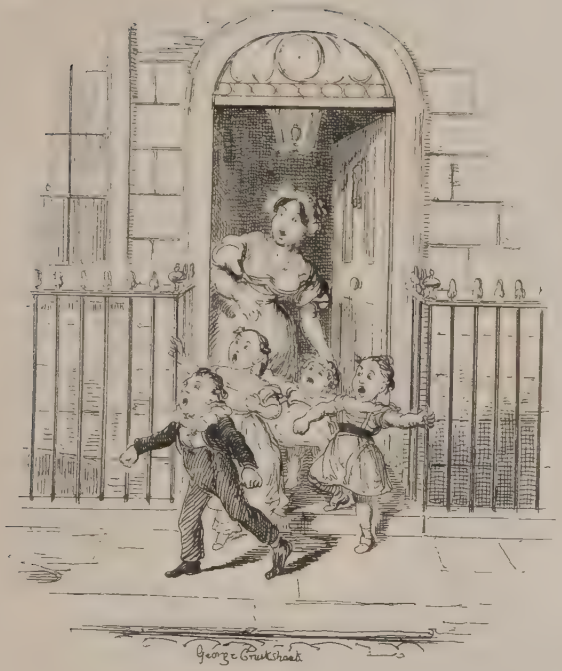
Our acquaintance with hackney-coach stands, is of long standing. We are a walking book of fares, feeling ourselves half-bound, as it were, to be always in the right on contested points. We know all the regular watermen within three miles of Covent-garden by sight, and should be almost tempted to believe that all the hackney-coach horses in that district knew us by sight too, if one-half of them were not blind. We take great interest in hackney-coaches, but we seldom drive, having a knack of turning ourselves over, when we attempt to do so. We are as great friends to horses—hackney-coach and otherwise—as the renowned Mr. Martin, of costermonger notoriety, and yet we never ride. We keep no horse, but a clothes-horse—enjoy no saddle so much as a saddle of mutton—and, following our own inclinations,

have never followed the hounds. Leaving these fleeter means of getting over the ground, or of depositing one's-self upon it, to those who like them, by hackney-coach stands we take our stand.

There is a hackney-coach stand, under the very window at which we are writing; there is only one coach on it now, but it is a fair specimen of the class of vehicles to which we have alluded—a great, lumbering, square concern of a dingy yellow colour (like a bilious brunette), with very small glasses, but very large frames; the pannels are ornamented with a faded coat of arms, in shape something like a dissected bat, the axletree is red, and the majority of the wheels are green. The box is partially covered by an old great-coat, with a multiplicity of capes, and some extraordinary-looking cloths; and the straw, with which the canvass cushion is stuffed, is sticking up in several places, as if in rivalry of the hay which is peeping through the chinks in the boot. The horses, with drooping heads, and each with a mane and tail as scanty and straggling as those of a worn-out rocking-horse, are standing patiently on some damp straw, occasionally wincing, and rattling the

harness; and, now and then, one of them lifts his mouth to the ear of his companion, as if he were saying, in a whisper, that he should like to assassinate the coachman. The coachman himself, is in the watering house; and the waterman, with his hands forced into his pockets as far as they can possibly go, is dancing the "double shuffle," in front of the pump, to keep his feet warm.

The servant-girl, with the pink ribbons, at No. 5, opposite, suddenly opens the street-door, and four small children forthwith rush out, and scream "Coach!" with all their might and main. The waterman darts from the pump, seizes the horses by their respective bridles, and drags them, and the coach too, round to the house, shouting all the time for the coachman at the very top, or rather very bottom of his voice—for it is a deep bass growl. A response is heard from the tap-room—the coachman, in his wooden-soled shoes, makes the street echo again as he runs across it— and then there is such a struggling, and backing, and grating of the kennel, to get the coach-door opposite the house-door, that the children are in perfect ecstasies of delight. What a commotion! The old lady, who


George Cruikshank

has been stopping there, for the last month, is going back to the country. Out comes box after box, and one side of the vehicle is filled with luggage in no time ; the children get into every body's way, and the youngest, who has upset himself in his attempts to carry an umbrella, is borne off wounded and kicking. The youngsters disappear, and a short pause ensues, during which the old lady is no doubt, kissing them all round in the back parlour. She appears, at last, followed by her married daughter, all the children, and both the servants, who, with the joint assistance of the coachman and waterman, manage to get her safely into the coach. A cloak is handed in, and a little basket, which we could almost swear contains a small black bottle and a paper of sandwiches. Up go the steps—bang goes the door—"Golden-cross, Charing-cross, Tom," says the waterman—"Good bye, Grandma," cry the children—off jingles the coach at the rate of three miles an hour—and the mamma and children retire into the house, with the exception of one little villain, who runs up the street at the top of his speed, pursued by the servant : not ill-pleased to have such an opportunity of displaying her

attractions. She brings him back, and, after casting two or three gracious glances across the way, which are either intended for us or the pot-boy (we are not quite certain which) shuts the door—and the hackney-coach stand, is again at a stand still.

We have been frequently amused with the intense delight with which "a servant of all work," who is sent for a coach, deposits herself inside; and the unspeakable gratification which boys, who have been despatched on a similar errand, appear to derive from mounting the box. But we never recollect to have been more amused with a hackney-coach party, than with one we saw early the other morning in Tottenham-court-road. It was a wedding-party, and emerged from one of the inferior streets near Fitzroy-square. There were the bride, with a thin white dress, and a great red face; and the bridesmaid, a little, dumpy, good-humoured young woman, dressed, of course, in the same appropriate costume; and the bridegroom and his chosen friend, in blue coats, yellow waistcoats, white trousers, and Berlin gloves to match. They stopped at the corner of the street, and called a coach with an air of indescribable dig-

nity. The moment they were in, the bridesmaid threw a red shawl, which she had, no doubt, brought on purpose, negligently over the number on the door, evidently to delude pedestrians into the belief that the hackney-coach was a private carriage; and away they went, perfectly satisfied that the imposition was successful, and quite unconscious that there was a great, staring number stuck up behind, on a plate as large as a schoolboy's slate. A shilling a mile!—the ride was worth five, at least to them.

What an interesting book a hackney-coach might produce, if it could carry as much in its head as it does in its body! The autobiography of a broken-down hackney-coach, would surely be as amusing as the autobiography of a broken-down hacknied dramatist; and it might tell as much of its travels *with* the pole, as others have of their expeditions *to* it. How many stories might be related of the different people it had conveyed on matters of business or profit—pleasure or pain! And how many melancholy tales of the same people at different periods! The country-girl—the showy, overdressed woman—the drunken prostitute! The raw apprentice—the dissipated spendthrift—the thief!

Talk of cabs! Cabs are all very well in cases of expedition, when it's a matter of neck or nothing, life or death, your temporary home or your long one. But, besides a cab's lacking that gravity of deportment which so peculiarly distinguishes a hackney-coach, let it never be forgotten that a cab is a thing of yesterday, and that he never was any thing better. A hackney-cab, has always been a hackney-cab, from his first entry into public life, whereas a hackney-coach is a remnant of past gentility—a victim to fashion—a hanger-on of an old English family, wearing their arms, and, in days of yore, escorted by men wearing their livery—stripped of his finery, and thrown upon the world, like a once-smart footman when he is no longer sufficiently juvenile for his office—progressing lower and lower in the scale of four-wheeled degradation, until at last it comes to—*a stand!*

Brokers' and Marine-Store Shops.

When we affirm that brokers' shops are strange places, and that if an authentic history of their contents could be procured, it would furnish many a page of amusement, and many a melancholy tale, it is necessary to explain the class of shops to which we allude.—Perhaps when we make use of the term "Brokers' Shops," the minds of our readers will at once picture large, handsome warehouses, exhibiting a long perspective of French-polished dining-tables, rosewood chiffonieres, and mahogany washhand-stands, with an occasional vista of a fourpost bedstead and hangings, and an appropriate foreground of dining-room chairs. Perhaps they will imagine that we mean a humbler class of second-hand furniture

repositories. Their imagination will then naturally lead them to that street at the back of Long-acre, which is composed almost entirely of brokers' shops: where you walk through groves of deceitful, showy-looking furniture, and where the prospect is occasionally enlivened by a bright red, blue, and yellow hearth-rug, embellished with the pleasing device of a mail-coach at full speed, or a strange animal, supposed to have been originally intended for a dog, with a mass of worsted-work in his mouth, which conjecture has likened to a basket of flowers. This, by the by, is a tempting article to young wives in the humbler ranks of life, who have got a first-floor front, to furnish—they are lost in admiration, and hardly know which to admire most. The dog is very beautiful, but they have got a dog already on the best tea-tray, and two more on the mantelpiece. Then there is something so genteel about that mail-coach; and the passengers outside (who are all hat) give it such an air of reality!

The goods here are adapted to the taste, or rather to the means, of cheap purchasers. There are some of the most beautiful *looking* Pembroke tables that were ever beheld: the wood

as green as the trees in the Park, and the leaves almost as certain to fall off, in the course of a year. There is also a most extensive assortment of tent and turn-up bedsteads, made of stained wood; and innumerable specimens of that base imposition on society—a sofa bedstead. A turn-up bedstead, is a blunt, honest piece of furniture; it may be slightly disguised with a sham drawer, and sometimes a mad attempt is even made to pass it off for a bookcase: ornament it as you will, however, the turn-up bedstead seems to defy disguise, and to insist on having it distinctly understood that he is a turn-up bedstead, and nothing else, that he is indispensably necessary, and that being so useful, he disdains to be ornamental.

How different is the demeanour of a sofa bedstead! Ashamed of its real use, it strives to appear an article of luxury and gentility, an attempt in which it miserably fails. It has neither the respectability of a sofa, nor the virtues of a bed; every man who keeps a sofa-bedstead in his house, becomes a party to a wilful and designing fraud—we question whether you could insult him more, than by insinuating that you entertain the least suspicion of its real use.

To return from this digression, we beg to say, that neither of these classes of brokers' shops forms the subject of this sketch. The shops to which we advert, are immeasurably inferior to those on whose outward appearance we have slightly touched. Our readers must often have observed in some by-street, in a poor neighbourhood, a small dirty shop, exposing for sale the most extraordinary and confused jumble of old, worn-out, wretched articles, that can well be imagined. Our wonder at their ever having been bought, is only to be equalled by our astonishment at the idea of their ever being sold again. On a board, at the side of the door, are placed about twenty books —all odd volumes, and as many wine-glasses— all different patterns; several locks, an old earthenware pan, full of rusty keys; two or three gaudy chimney-ornaments—cracked of course; the remains of a lustre, without any drops, a round frame like a capital O, which has once held a mirror; a flute, complete with the exception of the middle joint; a pair of curling-irons, and a tinder-box. In front of the shop window, are ranged some half-dozen high-backed chairs, with spinal complaints and

wasted legs; a corner cupboard, two or three very dark mahogany tables, with flaps like mathematical problems; some pickle-jars, some surgeons' ditto, with gilt lables and without stoppers; an unframed portrait of some lady who flourished about the beginning of the thirteenth century, by an artist who never flourished at all; an incalculable host of etceteras of every description, including bottles and cabinets, rags and bones, fenders and street-door knockers, fire-irons, wearing apparel, and bedding, a hall lamp, and a room door. Imagine, in addition to this incongruous mass, a black doll in a white frock, with two faces—one looking up the street, and the other looking down, swinging over the door: a board with the squeezed-up inscription "Dealer in marine stores," in lanky white letters, whose height is strangely out of proportion to their width; and you have before you precisely the kind of shop to which we wish to direct your attention.

Although the heterogeneous mixture of things which we have attempted to describe, will be found at all these places, it is curious to observe how truly and accurately some of the minor articles which are exposed for sale—articles of

wearing apparel, for instance—mark the character of the neighbourhood. Take Drury-lane and Covent-garden for example.

This is essentially a theatrical neighbourhood. There is not a pot-boy in the vicinity who is not, to a greater or less extent, a dramatic character. The errand-boys and chandler's-shop-keepers' sons, are all stage-struck: they "get up" plays in back kitchens hired for the purpose, and will stand before a shop-window for hours, contemplating a great staring portrait of Mr. Somebody or other, of the Royal Coburg Theatre, "as he appeared in the character of Tongo the Denounced." The consequence is, that there is not a marine-store shop in the neighbourhood, which does not exhibit for sale some faded articles of dramatic finery, such as three or four pairs of soiled buff boots, with turn-over red tops, heretofore worn by a "fourth robber," or "fifth mob;" a pair of rusty broad swords, a few gauntlets, and certain resplendent ornaments, which, if they were yellow instead of white, might be taken for insurance plates of the Sun Fire Office. There are several of these shops in the narrow streets and dirty courts, of which there are so many near our national theatres,

and they all have tempting goods of this description, with the addition, perhaps, of a lady's pink dress: covered with spangles, white wreaths, stage shoes, and a tiara like a tin lamp reflector. They have been purchased of some wretched supernumeraries, or sixth-rate actors, and are now offered for the benefit of the rising generation, who, on condition of their making certain weekly payments, amounting in the whole to about ten times their value, may avail themselves of such desirable bargains.

Let us take a very different quarter, and apply it to the same test. Look at a marine-store dealer's, in that reservoir of dirt, drunkenness, and drabs: thieves, oysters, baked potatoes, and pickled salmon—Ratcliff-highway. Here the wearing apparel is all nautical: rough blue jackets, with mother-of-pearl buttons, oil-skin hats, coarse checked shirts, and large canvass trousers, that look as if they were made for a pair of bodies, instead of a pair of legs, are the staple commodities. Then there are large bunches of cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, in colour and pattern, unlike any one ever saw before, with the exception of those on the backs of the three young ladies without bonnets who passed

us just now. The furniture is much the same as elsewhere, with the addition of one or two models of ships, and some old prints of naval engagements in still older frames. In the window are a few compasses, and a small tray containing silver watches, in clumsy, thick cases; and tobacco-boxes, the lid of each, ornamented with a ship or an anchor, or some such trophy. A sailor generally pawns or sells all he has before he has been long ashore, and if he does not, some favoured companion kindly saves him the trouble. In either case, it is an even chance that he afterwards unconsciously repurchases the same things at a higher price than he gave for them at first.

Again; pay a visit with a similar object, to a part of London, as unlike both of these as they are to each other. Cross over to the Surrey side, and look at such shops of this description as are to be found near the King's Bench prison, and in "the Rules." How different, and how strikingly illustrative of the decay of some of the unfortunate residents in this part of the metropolis! Imprisonment and neglect have done their work. There is contamination in the profligate denizens of a debtor's prison; old friends

have fallen off; the recollection of former prosperity has passed away, and with it, all thoughts for the past, all care for the future. First, watches and rings, then cloaks, coats, and all the more expensive articles of dress, have found their way to the pawnbroker's. That miserable resource has failed at last, and the sale of some trifling article, at one of these shops, has been the only mode left of raising a shilling or two, to meet the urgent demand of the moment. Dressing-cases, and writing-desks, too old to pawn, but too good to keep, guns, fishing-rods, musical instruments, in the same condition, have been first sold, and the sacrifice has been but slightly felt. But hunger must be allayed, and what has already become a habit, is easily resorted to, when an emergency arises. Light articles of clothing, first of the ruined man, then of his wife, and at last of their children, even of the youngest, have been parted with piecemeal. There they are, thrown carelessly together, until a purchaser presents himself, old and patched and repaired, it is true, but the make and materials tell of better days, and the older they are, the greater the misery and destitution of those whom they have once adorned.

The Bloomsbury Christening.

[The Author may be permitted to observe, that this sketch was published some time before the Farce entitled "The Christening" was first represented.]

Mr. Nicodemus Dumps, or, as his acquaintance called him, "long Dumps," was a bachelor, six feet high, and fifty years old,--cross, cadaverous, odd, and ill-natured. He was never happy but when he was miserable; and always miserable when he had the best reason to be happy. The only real comfort of his existence was to make every body about him wretched—then he might be truly said to enjoy life. He was afflicted with a situation in the Bank worth five hundred a-year, and he rented a "first floor furnished," at Pentonville, which he originally took, because it commanded a dismal prospect of an adjacent churchyard. He was familiar with the face of every tombstone, and the burial service seemed to excite his strongest sympathy. His friends said he was surly—he

insisted he was nervous; they thought him a lucky dog, but he protested that he was "the most unfortunate man in the world." Cold as he was, and wretched as he declared himself to be, he was not wholly unsusceptible of attachments. He revered the memory of Hoyle, as he was himself an admirable and imperturbable whist-player, and he chuckled with delight at a fretful and impatient adversary. He adored King Herod for his massacre of the Innocents; for if he hated one thing more than another, it was a child. He could hardly be said to hate any thing in particular, because he disliked every thing in general: but perhaps his greatest antipathies were cabs, old women, doors that would not shut, musical amateurs, and omnibus cads. He subscribed to the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for the pleasure of putting a stop to any harmless amusements; and he contributed largely towards the support of two itinerant methodist parsons, under the amiable hope that if circumstances rendered many happy in this world, they might perchance be rendered miserable by their fears for the next.

Mr. Dumps had a nephew who had been married about a year, and who was somewhat of a favourite with his uncle, because he was an admirable subject to exercise his misery-creating powers upon. Mr. Charles Kitterbell was a small, sharp, spare man, with a very large head, and a broad, good-humoured countenance. He looked like a faded giant, with the head and face partially restored; and he had a cast in his eye which rendered it quite impossible for any one with whom he conversed, to know where he was looking. His eyes appeared fixed on the wall, and he was staring you out of countenance: in short, there was no catching his eye, and perhaps it is a merciful dispensation of Providence that such eyes are not catching. In addition to these characteristics, it may be added that Mr. Charles Kitterbell was one of the most credulous and matter-of-fact little personages, that ever took *to* himself a wife, and *for* himself a house in Great Russell-street, Bedford-square. (Uncle Dumps always dropped the "Bedford-square," and inserted in lieu thereof, the fearful words "Tottenham-court-road.")

"No, but uncle, 'pon my life you must—

you must promise to be godfather," said Mr. Kitterbell, as he sat in conversation with his respected relative, one morning.

"I cannot: indeed I cannot," returned Dumps.

"Well, but why not? Jemima will think it very unkind. It's very little trouble."

"As to the trouble," rejoined the most unhappy man in existence "I don't mind that; but my nerves are in that state—I cannot go through the ceremony. You know I don't like going out.—For God's sake, Charles, don't fidget with that stool so, you'll drive me mad." Mr. Kitterbell, quite regardless of his uncle's nerves, had occupied himself for some ten minutes in describing a circle on the floor with one leg of the office-stool on which he was seated, keeping the other three up in the air, and holding fast on by the desk.

"I beg your pardon, uncle," said Kitterbell, quite abashed, suddenly releasing his hold of the desk, and bringing the three wandering legs back to the floor, with a force sufficient to drive them through it.

"But come, don't refuse. If it's a boy, you know, we must have two godfathers."

"*If* it's a boy!" said Dumps, "why can't you say at once whether it *is* a boy or not?"

"I should be very happy to tell you, but it's impossible I can undertake to say whether it's a girl or a boy, if the child isn't born yet."

"Not born yet!" echoed Dumps, with a gleam of hope lighting up his lugubrious visage; "oh, well, it *may* be a girl, and then you won't want me, or if it is a boy, it *may* die before it is christened."

"I hope not," said the father that expected to be, looking very grave.

"*I* hope not," acquiesced Dumps, evidently pleased with the subject. He was beginning to get happy. "*I* hope not, but distressing cases frequently occur during the first two or three days of a child's life; fits, I am told, are exceedingly common, and alarming convulsions are almost matters of course."

"Lord, uncle!" ejaculated little Kitterbell, gasping for breath.

"Yes; my landlady was confined—let me see—last Tuesday; an uncommonly fine boy. On the Thursday night, the nurse was sitting with him, upon her knee before the fire, and he was as well as possible. Suddenly he became

black in the face, and alarmingly spasmodic. The medical man was instantly sent for, and every remedy was tried, but—"

"How frightful!" interrupted the horror-stricken Kitterbell.

"The child died of course. However your child *may* not die, and if it should be a boy, and should live to be christened, why, I suppose I must be one of the sponsors." Dumps was evidently good-natured on the faith of his anticipations.

"Thank you uncle," said his agitated nephew, grasping his hand, as warmly as if he had done him some essential service. "Perhaps I had better not tell Mrs. K. what you have mentioned."

"Why, if she's low spirited, perhaps you had better not mention the melancholy case to her," returned Dumps, who of course had invented the whole story, "though perhaps it would be but doing your duty as a husband to prepare her for the worst."

A day or two afterwards, as Dumps was perusing a morning paper, at the chop-house which he regularly frequented, the following paragraph met his eye:

"*Births.*—On Saturday, the 18th inst., in Great Russell-street, the lady of Charles Kitterbell, Esq., of a son.

"It *is* a boy!" he exclaimed, dashing down the paper, to the astonishment of the waiters.

"It *is* a boy!" But he speedily regained his composure as his eye rested on a paragraph, quoting the number of infant deaths from the bills of mortality.

Six weeks passed away, and as no communication had been received from the Kitterbells, Dumps was beginning to flatter himself that the child was dead, when the following note painfully resolved his doubts:

"*Great Russell-street,*
"*Monday morning.*

"DEAR UNCLE,

"You will be delighted to hear that my dear Jemima has left her room, and that your future godson is getting on capitally; he was very thin at first, but he is getting much larger, and nurse says he is filling out, every day. He cries a good deal, and is a very singular colour, which made Jemima and me rather uncomfortable; but as nurse says it's natural, and as, of course, we know nothing about these things yet, we are quite satisfied with what nurse says.

We think he will be a sharp child; and nurse says she's sure he will, because he never goes to sleep. You will readily believe, that we are all very happy, only we're a little worn out for want of rest, as he keeps us awake all night; but this we must expect, nurse says, for the first six or eight months. He has been vaccinated, but in consequence of the operation being rather awkwardly performed, some small particles of glass were introduced into the arm with the matter. Perhaps this may in some degree account for his being rather fractious; at least, so nurse says. We propose to have him christened at twelve o'clock on Friday, at Saint George's church, in Hart-street, by the name of Frederick Charles William. Pray don't be later than a quarter before twelve. We shall have a very few friends in the evening, when, of course, we shall see you. I am sorry to say, that the dear boy appears rather restless and uneasy to-day: the cause, I fear, is fever.

"Believe me, dear Uncle,

"Yours affectionately,

"CHARLES KITTERBELL."

"P.S.—I open this note to say that we have

just discovered the cause of little Frederick's restlessness. It is not fever, as I apprehended, but a small pin, which nurse accidentally stuck in his leg, yesterday evening. We have taken it out, and he appears more composed, though he still sobs a good deal."

It is almost unnecessary to say, that the perusal of the above interesting statement was no great relief to the mind of the hypochondriacal Dumps. It was impossible to recede, however, so he put the best face—that is to say, an uncommonly miserable one—upon the matter; and purchased a handsome silver mug for the infant Kitterbell, upon which he ordered the initials "F. C. W. K.," with the customary untrained grape-vine-looking flourishes, and a large full stop, to be engraved forthwith.

Monday was a fine day, Tuesday was delightful, Wednesday was equal to either, and Thursday was finer than ever; four successive fine days in London! Hackney-coachmen became revolutionary, and crossing-sweepers began to doubt the existence of a First Cause. The *Morning Herald* informed its readers, that an old woman, in Camden Town, had been heard

to say, that the fineness of the season was "unprecedented in the memory of the oldest inhabitant:" and Islington clerks, with large families and small salaries, left off their black gaiters, disdained to carry their once green cotton umbrellas, and walked to town in the conscious pride of white stockings, and cleanly-brushed Bluchers. Dumps beheld all this with an eye of supreme contempt—his triumph was at hand —He knew that if it had been fine for four weeks instead of four days, it would rain when he went out; he was lugubriously happy in the conviction that Friday would be a wretched day—and so it was.

"I knew how it would be," said Dumps, as he turned round opposite the Mansion-house at half-past eleven o'clock on the Friday morning. —"I knew how it would be, *I* am concerned, and that's enough;"—and certainly the appearance of the day was sufficient to depress the spirits of a much more buoyant-hearted individual than himself.

It had rained, without a moment's cessation, since eight o'clock; every body that passed up Cheapside, and down Cheapside, looked we cold, and dirty. All sorts of forgotten and long-concealed umbrellas had been put into requi

sition. Cabs whisked about, with the "fare" as carefully boxed up behind two glazed calico curtains, as any mysterious picture in any one of Mrs. Radcliffe's castles, omnibus horses smoked like steam-engines, nobody thought of "standing up" under doorways or arches, they were painfully convinced it was a hopeless case; and so every body went hastily along, jumbling and jostling, and swearing and perspiring, and slipping about, like amateur skaters behind wooden chairs, on the Serpentine, on a frosty Sunday.

Dumps paused; he could not think of walking, being rather smart for the christening. If he took a cab, he was sure to be spilt, and a hackney-coach was too expensive for his economical ideas. An omnibus was waiting at the opposite corner—it was a desperate case—he had never heard of an omnibus upsetting or running away; and if the cad did knock him down, he could "pull him up" in return.

"Now, sir!" cried the young gentleman who officiated as "cad" to the "Lads of the Village," which was the name of the machine just noticed. Dumps crossed.

"This vay, sir!" shouted the driver of the "Hark away," pulling up his vehicle imme-

diately across the door of the opposition—"This vay, sir—he's full." Dumps hesitated, whereupon the "Lads of the Village" commenced pouring out a torrent of abuse against the "Hark away;" but the conductor of the "Admiral Napier" settled the contest in a most satisfactory manner for all parties, by seizing Dumps round the waist, and thrusting him into the middle of his vehicle, which had just come up, and only wanted the sixteenth inside.

"All right," said the "Admiral," and off the thing thundered, like a fire-engine at full gallop, with the kidnapped customer inside, standing in the position of a half-doubled-up bootjack, and falling about with every jerk of the machine, first on one side and then on the other, like a "Jack in the green," on May-day, "setting" to the lady with the brass ladle.

"For God's sake, where am I to sit?" inquired the miserable man, of an old gentleman, into whose stomach he had just fallen for the fourth time.

"Any where but on my *chest*, sir," replied the old gentleman, in a surly tone.

"Perhaps the *box* would suit the gentleman

better," suggested a very damp lawyer's clerk, in a pink shirt, and a smirking countenance.

After a great deal of struggling, and falling about, Dumps at last managed to squeeze himself into a seat, which, in addition to the slight disadvantage of being between a window that would not shut, and a door that must be open, placed him in close contact with a passenger, who had been walking about all the morning without an umbrella, and who looked as if he had spent the day in a full water-butt—only wetter.

"Don't bang the door so," said Dumps to the conductor, as he shut it, after letting out four of the passengers; "I am very nervous—it destroys me."

"Did any gen'lm'n say any think?" replied the cad, thrusting in his head, and trying to look as if he didn't understand the request.

"I told you, not to bang the door so!" repeated Dumps, with an expression of countenance like the knave of clubs in convulsions.

"Oh! vy, it's rather a sing'ler circumstance about this here door, sir, that it von't shut without banging," replied the conductor. And he

opened the door very wide, and shut it again with a terrific bang, in proof of the assertion.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said a little prim, wheezing old gentleman, sitting opposite Dumps, "I beg your pardon; but have you ever observed, when you have been in an omnibus on a wet day, that four people out of five, always come in with large cotton umbrellas, without a handle at the top, or the brass spike at the bottom?"

"Why, sir," returned Dumps, as he heard the clock strike twelve, "it never struck me before; but now you mention it, I——Hollo! hollo!"—shouted the persecuted individual, as the omnibus dashed past Drury-lane, where he had directed to be set down.—"Where is the cad?"

"I think he's on the box, sir," said the young gentleman before noticed, in the pink shirt, which looked like a white one ruled with red ink.

"I want to be set down!" said Dumps, in a faint voice, overcome by his previous efforts.

"I think these cads want to be *set down*," returned the attorney's clerk, chuckling at his sally.

"Hollo!" cried Dumps again.

"Hollo!" echoed the passengers: the omnibus passed St. Giles's church.

"Hold hard!" said the conductor; "I'm blowed if we han't forgot the gen'lm'n as vas to be set down at Doory-lane.—Now, sir, make haste, if you please," he added, opening the door, and assisting Dumps out with as much coolness as if it was "all right." Dumps's indignation was for once getting the better of his cynical equanimity. "Drury-lane!" he gasped, with the voice of a boy in a cold bath for the first time.

"Doory-lane, sir?—yes, sir,—third turning on the right-hand side, sir."

Dumps's passion was paramount; he clutched his umbrella, and was striding off with the firm determination of not paying the fare. The cad, by a remarkable coincidence, happened to entertain a directly contrary opinion, and heaven knows how far the altercation would have proceeded, if it had not been most ably and satisfactorily brought to a close, by the driver.

"Hollo!" said that respectable person, standing up on the box, and leaning with one hand on the roof of the omnibus. "Hollo,

Tom! tell the gentleman if so be as he feels aggrieved, we will take him up to the Edge-er (Edgeware) Road for nothing, and set him down at Doory-lane when we comes back. He can't reject that, anyhow."

The argument was irresistible: Dumps paid the disputed sixpence, and in a quarter of an hour was on the staircase of No. 14, Great Russell-street.

Every thing indicated, that preparations were making for the reception of "a few friends" in the evening. Two dozen extra tumblers, and four ditto wine-glasses—looking any thing but transparent, with little bits of straw in them—were on the slab in the passage, just arrived. There was a great smell of nutmeg, port wine, and almonds on the staircase; the covers were taken off the stair carpet, and the figure of the Venus on the first landing, looked as if it were ashamed of the composition-candle in its right hand, which contrasted beautifully with the lamp-blacked drapery of the goddess of love. The female servant (who looked very warm and bustling) ushered Dumps into a front drawing-room, very prettily furnished, with a plentiful sprinkling of little baskets, paper table-mats,

china watchmen, pink and gold albums, and rainbow-bound little books, on the different tables.

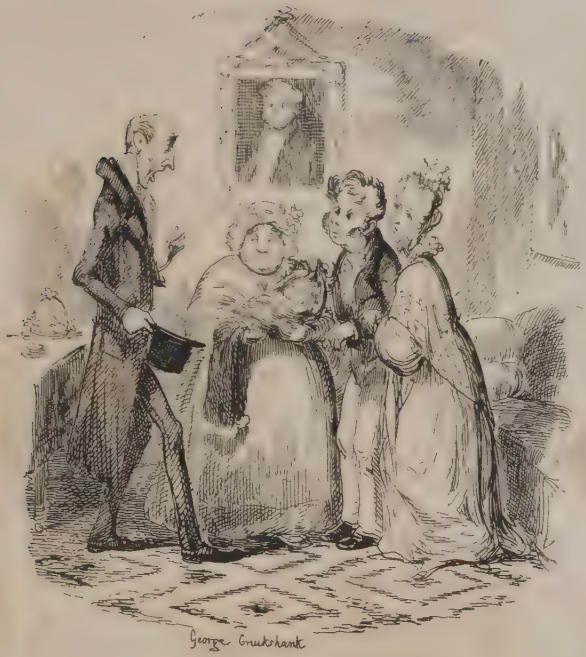
"Ah, uncle!" said Mr. Kitterbell, "how d'ye do? allow me—Jemima, my dear—my uncle—I think you've seen Jemima before, sir?"

"Have had the *pleasure*," returned big Dumps, his tone and look making it doubtful whether in his life he had ever experienced the sensation.

"I'm sure," said Mrs. Kitterbell, with a languid smile, and a slight cough, "I'm sure —hem—any friend of Charles's—hem—much less a relation is———"

"Knew you'd say so, my love," said little Kitterbell, who, while he appeared to be gazing on the opposite houses, was looking at his wife with a most affectionate air; "bless you." The last two words, were accompanied with an interesting simper, and a squeeze of the hand, which stirred up all uncle Dumps's bile.

"Jane, tell nurse to bring down baby," said Mrs. Kitterbell, addressing the servant. Mrs. Kitterbell was a tall, thin young lady, with very light hair, and a particularly white face—one of those young women who almost invariably,


George Cruikshank

though one hardly knows why, recal to one's mind the idea of a cold fillet of veal. Out went the servant, and in came the nurse, with a remarkably small parcel in her arms, packed up in a blue mantle trimmed with white fur.—This was the baby.

"Now, uncle," said Mr. Kitterbell, lifting up that part of the mantle which covered the infant's face, with an air of great triumph. "*Who* do you think he's like?"

"He! he! Yes, who?" said Mrs. K. putting her arm through her husband's, and looking up into Dumps's face with an expression of as much interest as she was capable of displaying.

"Good God, how small he is!" cried the amiable uncle, starting back with well-feigned surprise; "*remarkably* small indeed."

"Do you think so?" inquired poor little Kitterbell, rather alarmed. "He's a monster to what he was—an't he nurse?"

"He's a dear," said the nurse, squeezing the child, and evading the question—not because she scrupled to disguise the fact, but because she couldn't afford to throw away the chance of Dumps's half-crown.

"Well, but who is he like?" inquired little Kitterbell.

Dumps looked at the little pink heap before him, and only thought at the moment of the best mode of mortifying the youthful parents.

"I really don't know *who* he's like," he answered, very well knowing the reply expected of him.

"Don't you think he's like *me?*" inquired his nephew, with a knowing air.

"Oh, *decidedly* not!" returned Dumps, with an emphasis not to be misunderstood. "Decidedly not like you.—Oh, certainly not."

"Like Jemima?" asked Kitterbell, faintly.

"Oh dear, no; not in the least. I'm no judge, of course, in such cases; but I really think he's more like one of those little interesting carved representations that one sometimes sees blowing a trumpet on a tombstone!" The nurse stooped down over the child, and with great difficulty prevented an explosion of mirth. Pa and ma looked almost as miserable as their amiable uncle.

"Well!" said the disappointed little father, "you'll be better able to tell what he's like

by and by. You shall see him this evening with his mantle off."

"Thank you," said Dumps, feeling particularly grateful.

"Now, my love," said Kitterbell to his wife, "it's time we were off. We're to meet the other godfather and the godmother at the church, uncle,—Mr. and Mrs. Wilson from over the way—uncommonly nice people. My love, are you well wrapped up?"

"Yes, dear."

"Are you sure you won't have another shawl?" inquired the anxious husband.

"No, sweet," returned the charming mother, accepting Dumps's proffered arm; and the little party entered the hackney-coach that was to take them to the church; Dumps amusing Mrs. Kitterbell by expatiating largely on the danger of measles, thrush, teeth-cutting, and other interesting diseases to which children are subject.

The ceremony, (which occupied about five minutes) passed off, without anything particular occurring. The clergyman had to dine some distance from town, and had got two churchings, three christenings, and a funeral, to perform in

something less than an hour. The godfathers and godmother, therefore, promised to renounce the devil and all his works—"and all that sort of thing"—as little Kitterbell said—"in less than no time;" and, with the exception of Dumps nearly letting the child fall into the font when he handed it to the clergyman, the whole affair went off in the usual business-like, and matter-of-course manner, and Dumps re-entered the Bank-gates at two o'clock, with a heavy heart, and the painful conviction that he was regularly booked for an evening party.

Evening came—and so did Dumps's pumps, black silk stockings, and white cravat, which he had ordered to be forwarded, per boy, from Pentonville. The depressed godfather dressed himself at a friend's counting-house, from whence, with his spirits fifty degrees below proof, he sallied forth—as the weather had cleared up and the evening was tolerably fine—to walk to Great Russell-street. Slowly he paced up Cheapside, Newgate-street, down Snow Hill, and up Holborn ditto, looking as grim as the figure-head of a-man-of-war, and finding out fresh causes of misery at every step. As he was crossing the corner of Hatton-garden, a

man, apparently intoxicated, rushed against him and would have knocked him down, had he not been providentially caught by a very genteel young gentleman who happened to be close to him at the time. The shock so disarranged Dumps's nerves, as well as his dress, that he could hardly stand. The gentleman took his arm, and in the kindest manner walked with him as far as Furnival's Inn. Dumps, for about the first time in his life, felt grateful and polite; and he and the gentlemanly-looking young man, parted with mutual expressions of good will.

"There are at least some well-disposed men in the world," ruminated the misanthropical Dumps, as he proceeded towards his destination.

Rat — tat — ta-ra-ra-ra-ra-rat — knocked a hackney-coachman at Kitterbell's door, in imitation of a gentleman's servant, just as Dumps reached it; and out came an old lady in a large toque, and an old gentleman in a blue coat, and three female copies of the old lady, in pink dresses, and shoes to match.

"It's a large party," sighed the unhappy godfather, wiping the perspiration from his fore-

head, and leaning against the area-railings. It was some time before the miserable man could muster up courage to knock at the door, and when he did, the smart appearance of a neighbouring green-grocer (who had been hired to wait for seven and sixpence, and whose calves alone, were worth double the money), the lamp in the passage, and the Venus on the landing, added to the hum of many voices, and the sound of a harp and two violins, painfully convinced him that his surmises were but too well founded.

"How are you?" said little Kitterbell, in a greater bustle than ever, bolting out of the little back parlour with a corkscrew in his hand, and various particles of sawdust, looking like so many inverted commas, on his inexpressibles.

"Good God!" said Dumps, turning into the aforesaid parlour to put his shoes on, which he had brought in his coat-pocket, and still more appalled by the sight of seven fresh drawn corks, and a corresponding number of decanters, "How many people are there up stairs?"

"Oh, not above thirty-five. We've had the carpet taken up in the back drawing-room, and the piano and the card-tables are in the front. Jemima thought we'd better have a regular sit-

down supper, in the front parlour, because of the speechifying, and all that. But, Lord! uncle, what's the matter?" continued the excited little man, as Dumps stood with one shoe on, rummaging his pockets with the most frightful distortion of visage. "What have you lost? Your pocket-book?"

"No," returned Dumps, diving first into one pocket, and then into the other; and speaking in a voice like Desdemona with the pillow over her mouth.

"Your card-case? snuff-box? the key of your lodgings?" continued Kitterbell, pouring question on question, with the rapidity of lightning.

"No! no!" ejaculated Dumps, still diving eagerly into his empty pocket.

"Not—not—the *mug* you spoke of this morning?"

"Yes, the *mug!*" replied Dumps, sinking into a chair.

"How *could* you have done it?" inquired Kitterbell. "Are you sure you brought it out!"

"Yes! yes! I see it all," said Dumps, starting up as the idea flashed across his mind

"miserable dog that I am—I was born to suffer. I see it all; it was the gentlemanly-looking young man!"

"Mr. Dumps!" shouted the green-grocer in a stentorian voice, as he ushered the somewhat recovered godfather into the drawing-room half an hour after the above declaration. "Mr. Dumps!"—every body looked at the door, and in came Dumps, feeling about as much out of place, as a salmon might be supposed to be, on a gravel-walk.

"Happy to see you again," said Mrs. Kitterbell, quite unconscious of the unfortunate man's confusion and misery; "you must allow me to introduce you to a few of our friends:—my mamma, Mr. Dumps—my papa and sisters." Dumps seized the hand of the mother, as warmly as if she was his own parent, bowed *to* the young ladies, and *against* a gentleman behind him, and took no notice whatever of the father, who had been bowing incessantly for three minutes and a quarter.

"Uncle," said little Kitterbell, after Dumps had been introduced to a select dozen or two, you must let me lead you to the other end of the room, to introduce you to my friend Danton.

Such a splendid fellow!—I'm sure you'll like him—this way."—Dumps followed as tractably as a tame bear.

Mr. Danton was a young man of about five-and-twenty, with a considerable stock of impudence, and a very small share of ideas: he was a great favourite, especially with young ladies of from sixteen to twenty-six years of age, both inclusive. He could imitate the French-Horn to admiration, sing comic songs most inimitably, and had the most insinuating way of saying impertinent nothings to his doting female admirers. He had acquired, somehow or other, the reputation of being a great wit; and, accordingly, whenever he opened his mouth, every body who knew him laughed very heartily.

The introduction took place in due form. Mr. Danton bowed and twirled a lady's handkerchief, which he held in his hand, in a most comic way. Every body smiled.

"Very warm," said Dumps, feeling it necessary to say something.

"Yes. It was warmer yesterday," returned the brilliant Mr. Danton.—A general laugh.

"I have great pleasure in congratulating you on your first appearance in the character of a

father, sir," he continued, addressing Dumps—"godfather, I mean."—The young ladies were convulsed, and the gentlemen in ecstacies.

A general hum of admiration interrupted the conversation, and announced the entrance of nurse with the baby. A general rush of the young ladies immediately took place. (Girls are always *so* fond of babies in company.)

"Oh, you dear!" said one.

"How sweet!" cried another, in a low tone of the most enthusiastic admiration.

"Heavenly!" added a third.

"Oh! what dear little arms!" said a fourth: holding up an arm and fist, about the size and shape of the leg of a fowl cleanly picked.

"Did you ever"—said a little coquette with a large bustle, who looked like a French lithograph, appealing to a gentleman in three waistcoats—"Did you ever"——

"Never, in my life," returned her admirer, pulling up his collar.

"Oh! *do* let me take it, nurse," cried another young lady. "The love!"

"Can it open its eyes, nurse?" inquired another, affecting the utmost innocence.—Suffice it to say that the single ladies unanimously

voted him an angel, and that the married ones, *nem. con.*, agreed that he was decidedly the finest baby they had ever beheld—except their own.

The quadrilles were resumed with great spirit. Mr. Danton was universally admitted to be beyond himself: several young ladies enchanted the company, and gained admirers, by singing "We met"—"I saw her at the Fancy Fair"—"Can I believe Love's Wreath will pain?"—and other equally sentimental and interesting ballads. "The young men," as Mrs. Kitterbell said, "made themselves very agreeable;" the girls did not lose their opportunity; and the evening promised to go off excellently. Dumps didn't mind it; he had devised a plan for himself—a little bit of fun in his own way—and he was almost happy! He played a rubber and lost every point. Mr. Danton said, he could not have lost every point, because he made a point of losing:—every body laughed tremendously. Dumps retorted with a better joke, and nobody smiled, with the exception of the host, who seemed to consider it his duty to laugh, till he was black in the face, at every thing.

There was only one drawback—the musicians did not play with quite as much spirit as could have been wished. The cause, however, was satisfactorily explained; for it appeared, on the testimony of a gentleman who had come up from Gravesend in the afternoon, that they had been engaged on board a steamer all day, and had played, almost without cessation, all the way to Gravesend, and all the way back again.

The "sit-down supper" was excellent; there were four barley-sugar temples on the table, which would have looked beautiful if they had not melted away, when the supper began; and a water-mill, whose only fault was, that instead of going round, it ran over the table-cloth. Then there were fowls, and tongue, and trifle, and sweets, and lobster salad, and potted beef—and every thing. And little Kitterbell kept calling out for clean plates, and the clean plates did not come; and then the gentlemen who wanted the plates said they didn't mind, they'd take a lady's; and then Mrs. Kitterbell applauded their gallantry; and the greengrocer ran about, till he thought his 7*s.* 6*d.* was very hardly earned; and the young ladies didn't eat

much for fear it shouldn't look romantic, and the married ladies eat as much as possible for fear they should'nt have enough; and a great deal of wine was drank, and every body talked and laughed considerably.

"Hush! hush!" said Mr. Kitterbell, rising and looking very important. "My love (this was addressed to his wife at the other end of the table), take care of Mrs. Maxwell, and your mamma, and the rest of the married ladies; the gentlemen will persuade the young ladies to fill their glasses, I am sure."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said long Dumps, in a very sepulchral voice, and rueful accent: rising from his chair, like the ghost in Don Juan, "will you have the kindness to charge your glasses? I am desirous of proposing a toast."

A dead silence ensued, and the glasses were filled—every body looked serious—"from *gay* to *grave*, from lively to severe."

"Ladies and gentlemen," slowly continued the ominous Dumps, "I"—(Here Mr. Danton imitated two notes from the French-horn, in a very loud key, which electrified the nervous toast-proposer, and convulsed his audience).

"Order! order!" said little Kitterbell, endeavouring to suppress his laughter.

"Order!" said the gentlemen.

"Danton be quiet," said a particular friend, on the opposite side of the table.

"Ladies and gentlemen," resumed Dumps, somewhat recovered, and not much disconcerted, for he was always a pretty good hand at a speech—"In accordance with what is, I believe the established usage on these occasions, I, as one of the godfathers of Master Frederick Charles William Kitterbell—(here the speaker's voice faltered, for he remembered the mug)—venture to rise to propose a toast. I need hardly say, that it is the health and prosperity of that young gentleman, the particular event of whose early life, we are here met to celebrate—(applause). Ladies and gentlemen, it is impossible to suppose that our friends here, whose sincere well-wishers we all are, can pass through life without some trials, considerable suffering, severe affliction, and heavy losses!"—Here the arch-traitor paused, and slowly drew forth a long, white pocket-handkerchief—his example was followed by several ladies. "That these trials may be long spared them, is my mos

earnest prayer, my most fervent wish (a distinct sob from the grandmother.) I hope and trust, ladies and gentlemen, that the infant whose christening we have this evening met to celebrate, may not be removed from the arms of his parents by premature decay (several cambrics were in requisition); that his young and now *apparently* healthy form, may not be wasted by lingering disease. (Here Dumps cast a sardonic glance around, for a great sensation was manifest among the married ladies.) You, I am sure, will concur with me in wishing that he may live to be a comfort, and a blessing, to his parents. ('Hear, hear!' and an audible sob from Mr. Kitterbell.) But, should he not be what we could wish—should he forget in after-times, the duty which he owes to them—should they unhappily experience that distracting truth, 'how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child'"—Here Mrs. Kitterbell, with her handkerchief to her eyes, and accompanied by several ladies, rushed from the room, and went into violent hysterics in the passage; leaving her better half, in almost as bad a condition, and a general impression in

Dumps's favour; for people like sentiment, after all.

It need hardly be added, that this occurrence quite put a stop to the harmony of the evening. Vinegar, hartshorn, and cold water, were now as much in request as negus, rout-cakes, and *bon-bons* had been a short time before. Mrs. Kitterbell was immediately conveyed to her apartment, the musicians were silenced, flirting ceased, and the company slowly departed. Dumps left the house at the commencement of the bustle, and walked home, with a light step, and (for him) a cheerful heart. His landlady, who slept in the next room, has offered to make oath that she heard him laugh, in his peculiar manner, after he had locked his door. The assertion, however, is so improbable, and bears on the face of it, such strong evidence of untruth, that it has never obtained credence to this hour.

The family of Mr. Kitterbell has considerably increased since the period to which we have referred; he has now two sons and a daughter: and as he expects, at no distant period, to have another addition to his blooming progeny, he

is anxious to secure an eligible godfather for the occasion. He is determined, however, to impose upon him two conditions : he must bind himself, by a solemn obligation, not to make any speech after supper : and it is indispensable that he should be in no way connected with "the most miserable man in the world."

Gin-Shops.

It is a very remarkable circumstance, that different trades appear to partake of the disease to which elephants and dogs are especially liable, and to run stark, staring, raving mad, periodically. The great distinction between the animals and the trades, is, that the former run mad with a certain degree of propriety—they are very regular in their irregularities. You know the period at which the emergency will arise, and provide against it accordingly. If an elephant run mad, you are all ready for him — kill or cure—pills or bullets— calomel in conserve of roses, or lead in a musket-barrel. If a dog happen to look unpleasantly warm in the summer months, and to trot about the shady side of the streets, with a quarter of a yard of tongue hanging out of his mouth, a thick lea-

ther muzzle, which has been previously prepared in compliance with the thoughtful injunctions of the Legislature, is instantly clapped over his head, by way of making him cooler, and he either looks remarkably unhappy for the next six weeks, or becomes legally insane, and goes mad as it were, by act of Parliament. But these trades are as eccentric as comets; nay, worse, for no one can calculate on the recurrence of the strange appearances which betoken the disease: moreover, the contagion is general, and the quickness with which it diffuses itself, almost incredible.

We will cite two or three cases in illustration of our meaning. Six or eight years ago, the epidemic began to display itself, among the linen-drapers and haberdashers. The primary symptoms, were an inordinate love of plate-glass, and a passion for gas-lights and gilding. The disease gradually progressed, and at last attained a fearful height. Quiet, dusty old shops in different parts of town, were pulled down; spacious premises, with stuccoed fronts and gold letters, were erected instead; floors were covered with Turkey carpets; roofs supported by massive pillars; doors knocked into

windows, a dozen squares of glass into one, one shopman into a dozen,—and there is no knowing what would have been done, if it had not been fortunately discovered, just in time, that the Commissioners of Bankrupts were as competent to decide such cases as the Commissioners of Lunacy, and that a little confinement and gentle examination, did wonders. The disease abated: it died away: and a year or two of comparative tranquillity ensued. Suddenly it burst out again among the chemists; the symptoms were the same, with the addition of a strong desire to stick the royal arms over the shop-door, and a great rage for mahogany, varnish, and expensive floor-cloth. Then the hosiers were infected, and began to pull down their shop-fronts, with frantic recklessness. The mania again died away, and the public began to congratulate themselves upon its entire disappearance, when it burst forth with tenfold violence among the publicans and keepers of "wine vaults." From that moment it has spread among them with unprecedented rapidity, exhibiting a concatenation of all the previous symptoms; and onward it has rushed to every part of town, knocking down all the

old public-houses, and depositing splendid mansions, stone balustrades, rosewood fittings, immense lamps, and illuminated clocks, at the corner of every street.

The extensive scale on which these places are established, and the ostentatious manner in which the business of even the smallest among them, is divided into branches, is most amusing. A handsome plate of ground glass in one door directs you "To the Counting-house," another to the "Bottle Department," a third, to the "Wholesale Department; a fourth, to "The Wine Promenade;" and so forth, until we are in daily expectation of meeting with a "Brandy Bell," or a Whiskey Entrance." Then ingenuity is exhausted in devising attractive titles for the different descriptions of gin; and the dram-drinking portion of the community, as they gaze upon the gigantic black and white announcements, which are only to be equalled in size by the figures beneath them, are left in a state of pleasing hesitation between "The Cream of the Valley," "The Out and Out," "The No Mistake," "The Good for Mixing," "The real Knock-me-down," "The celebrated Butter Gin," "The regular Flare-up," and a

dozen other, equally inviting and wholesome *liqueurs*. Although places of this description are to be met with in every second street, they are invariably numerous and splendid, in precise proportion to the dirt and poverty of the surrounding neighbourhood. The gin-shops in and near Drury-lane, Holborn, St. Giles's, Covent-garden, and Clare-market, are the handsomest in London · there is more of filth and squalid misery near those great thoroughfares than in any part of this mighty city.

We will endeavour to sketch the bar of a large gin-shop, and its ordinary customers, for the edification of such of our readers as may not have had opportunities of observing such scenes; and on the chance of finding one, well suited to our purpose, we will make for Drury-lane, through the narrow streets and dirty courts which divide it from Oxford-street, and that classical spot adjoining the brewery at the bottom of Tottenham-court-road, best known to the initiated as the "Rookery." The filthy and miserable appearance of this part of London can hardly be imagined by those (and there are many such) who have not witnessed it. Wretched houses, with broken windows patched

with rags and paper, every room let out to a different family, and in many instances to two, or even three: fruit and "sweet-stuff" manufacturers in the cellars, barbers and red-herring venders in the front parlours, coblers in the back. A bird-fancier in the first floor, three families on the second, starvation in the attics, Irishmen in the passage; a "musician" in the front kitchen; and a charwoman and five hungry children in the back one—filth every where—a gutter before the houses and a drain behind them—clothes drying at the windows, slops emptying from the ditto: girls of fourteen or fifteen, with matted hair, walking about barefooted, and in old white great coats, almost their only covering; boys of all ages, in coats of all sizes, and no coats at all; men and women, in every variety of scanty and dirty apparel, lounging about, scolding, drinking, smoking, squabbling, fighting, and swearing.

You turn the corner. What a change! All is light and brilliancy. The hum of many voices, issues from that splendid gin-shop which forms the commencement of the two streets opposite; and the gay building with the fantastically

ornamented parapet, the illuminated clock, the plate-glass windows surrounded by stucco rosettes, and its profusion of gas-lights in richly-gilt burners, is perfectly dazzling when contrasted with the darkness and dirt we have just left. The interior is even gayer than the exterior. A bar of French-polished mahogany, elegantly carved, extends the whole width of the place; and there are two side aisles of great casks, painted green and gold, enclosed within a light brass rail, and bearing such inscriptions as "Old Tom, 549;" "Young Tom, 360;" "Sampson, 1421." Beyond the bar is a lofty and spacious saloon, full of the same enticing vessels, with a gallery running round it, equally well furnished. On the counter, in addition to the usual spirit apparatus, are two or three little baskets of cakes and biscuits, which are carefully secured at the top with wicker-work, to prevent their contents being unlawfully abstracted. Behind it, are two showily-dressed damsels with large necklaces, dispensing the spirits and "compounds." They are assisted by the ostensible proprietor of the concern, a stout, coarse fellow in a fur cap, put on very

much on one side to give him a knowing air, and display his sandy whiskers to the best advantage.

Look at the groups of customers, and observe the different air with which they call for what they want, as they are more or less struck by the grandeur of the establishment. The two old washerwomen, who are seated on the little bench to the left of the bar, are rather overcome by the head-dresses, and haughty demeanour of the young ladies who officiate; and receive their half-quartern of gin-and-peppermint, with considerable deference, prefacing a request for "one of them soft biscuits," with a "Jist be good enough, ma'am," &c. They are quite astonished at the impudent air of the young-fellow in the brown coat, and bright buttons, who, ushering in his two companions, and walking up to the bar in as careless a manner as if he had been used to green and gold ornaments all his life, winks at one of the young ladies with singular coolness, and calls for a "kervorten and a three-out glass," just as if the place were his own. "Gin for you, sir," says the young lady when she has drawn it: carefully looking every way but the right one, to show that the

wink had no effect upon her. "For me, Mary, my dear," replies the gentleman in brown. "My name an't Mary as it happens," says the young girl, in a most insinuating manner as she delivers the change. "Vell, if it an't, it ought to be," responds the irresistible one: "all the Marys as ever I see, was handsome gals." Here the young lady, not precisely remembering how blushes are managed in such cases, abruptly ends the flirtation by addressing the female in the faded feathers who has just entered, and who, after stating explicitly, to prevent any subsequent misunderstanding, that "this gentleman pays," calls for "a glass of port wine and a bit of sugar," the drinking which, and sipping another, accompanied by sundry whisperings to her companion, and no small quantity of giggling, occupies a considerable time.

Observe the group on the other side: those two old men who came in "just to have a drain," finished their third quartern a few seconds ago; they have made themselves crying drunk, and the fat, comfortable-looking elderly women, who had "a glass of rum-*srub*" each, having chimed in with their complaints on the

hardness of the times, one of the women has agreed to stand a glass round, jocularly observing that "grief never mended no broken bones, and as good people's wery scarce, what I says is, make the most on 'em, and that's all about it;" a sentiment which appears to afford unlimited satisfaction to those who have nothing to pay.

It is growing late, and the throng of men, women, and children, who have been constantly going in and out, dwindles down to two or three occasional stragglers—cold, wretched-looking creatures, in the last stage of emaciation and disease. The knot of Irish labourers at the lower end of the place, who have been alternately shaking hands with, and threatening the life of, each other for the last hour, become furious in their disputes; and finding it impossible to silence one man, who is particularly anxious to adjust the difference, they resort to the infallible expedient of knocking him down and jumping on him afterwards. Out rush the man in the fur cap, and the pot-boy: a scene of riot and confusion ensues; half the Irishmen get shut out, and the other half get shut in, the pot-boy is knocked in among the tubs in no

time; the landlord hits every body, and every body hits the landlord, the barmaids scream, in come the police; and the rest is a confused mixture of arms, legs, staves, torn coats, shouting, and struggling. Some of the party are borne off to the station-house: and the remainder slink home to beat their wifes for complaining, and kick the children for daring to be hungry.

We have sketched this subject very slightly, not only because our limits compel us to do so, but because, if it were pursued further, it would be painful and repulsive. Well-disposed gentlemen, and charitable ladies, would alike turn with coldness and disgust from a description of the drunken, besotted men, and wretched, broken-down, miserable women, who form no inconsiderable portion of the frequenters of these haunts; forgetting, in the pleasant consciousness of their own high rectitude, the poverty of the one, and the temptation of the other. Gin-drinking is a great vice in England, but poverty is a greater; and until you can cure it, or persuade a half-famished wretch not to seek relief in the temporary oblivion of his own misery, with the pittance which, divided among his family, would just furnish a morsel

of bread for each, gin-shops will increase in number and splendour. If Temperance Societies could suggest an antidote against hunger and distress, or establish dispensaries for the gratuitous distribution of bottles of Lethe-water, gin-palaces would be numbered among the things that were. Until then, their decrease may be despaired of.

Public Dinners.

All public dinners in London, from the Lord Mayor's annual banquet at Guildhall, to the chimney-sweepers' "hanniwersary" at White Conduit house; from the Goldsmiths' to the Butchers', from the Sheriffs' to the Licensed Victuallers', are amusing scenes. Of all entertainments of this description, however, we think the annual dinner of some public charity is the most amusing. At a Company's dinner, the people are nearly all alike—regular old stagers who make it a matter of business, and a thing not to be laughed at. At a political dinner, every-body is disagreeable, and inclined to speechify—much the same thing, by the by; but at a charity dinner you see people of all sorts, kinds, and descriptions. The wine may not be remarkably special, to be sure, and

we have heard some hard-hearted monsters grumble at the collection; but we really think the amusement to be derived from the occasion, sufficient to counterbalance, even these disadvantages.

Let us suppose you are induced to attend a dinner of this description—"Indigent Orphans' Friends' Benevolent Institution," we think it is. The name of the charity is a line or two longer, but you have forgotten the rest. You have a distinct recollection, however, that you purchased a ticket at the solicitation of some charitable friend: and you deposit yourself in a hackney-coach, the driver of which—no doubt that you may do the thing in style—turns a deaf ear to your earnest entreaties to be set down at the corner of Great Queen-street, and persists in carrying you to the very door of the Freemasons', round which a crowd of people are assembled to witness the entrance of the indigent orphans' friends. You hear great speculations, as you pay the fare, on the possibility of your being the Noble Lord who is announced to fill the chair on the occasion, and are highly gratified to hear it eventually decided that you are only a "wocalist."

The first thing that strikes you, on your entrance, is the astonishing importance of the committee. You observe a door on the first landing, carefully guarded by two waiters, in and out of which stout gentlemen with very red faces, keep running, with a degree of speed, highly unbecoming the gravity of persons of their years and corpulency. You pause, quite alarmed at the bustle, and thinking, in your innocence, that two or three people must have been carried out of the dining-room, in fits, at the very least. You are immediately undeceived by the waiter—"Up stairs, if you please, sir; this is the committee-room." Up stairs you go, accordingly; wondering as you mount what the duties of the committee can be, and whether they ever do any thing beyond confusing each other, and running over the waiters.

Having duly deposited your hat and cloak, and received a remarkably small scrap of pasteboard in exchange (which, as a matter of course, you lose, before you require it again), you enter the hall, down which there are four long tables for the less distinguished guests, with a cross table on a raised platform at the upper end, for the reception of the very particular friends of

the indigent orphans. Being fortunate enough to find a plate without any body's card in it, you wisely seat yourself at once, and have a little leisure to look about you. Waiters, with wine-baskets in their hands, are placing decanters of Sherry down the tables, at very respectful distances. Melancholy-looking salt-cellars, and decayed vinegar-cruets, which might have belonged to the parents of the indigent orphans in their time, are scattered at distant intervals on the cloth: and the knives and forks look as if they had done duty, at every public dinner in London, since the accession of George the First. The musicians are scraping and grating and screwing tremendously—playing no notes but notes of preparation; and several gentlemen are gliding along the sides of the tables, looking into plate after plate with frantic eagerness, the expression of their countenances growing more and more dismal as they meet with every body's card but their own.

You turn round to take a look at the table behind you, and—not being in the habit of attending public dinners—are somewhat struck by the appearance of the party on which your eye rests. One of its principal members ap-

pears to be a little man, with a long and rather inflamed face, and grey hair brushed bolt upright in front; he wears a wisp of black silk round his neck, without any stiffener, as an apology for a neckerchief, and is addressed by his companions by the familiar appellation of "Fitz." Near him is a stout man in a white neckerchief and buff waistcoat, with shining dark hair cut very short in front, and a great round healthy-looking face, on which he studiously preserves a half-sentimental simper. Next him again, is a large-headed man, with black hair and bushy whiskers; and opposite them are two or three others, one of whom is a little round-faced person, in a dress-stock and blue under waistcoat. There is something peculiar in their air and manner, though you could hardly describe what it is; and you can't divest yourself of the idea that they have come for some other purpose than mere eating and drinking. You have no time to debate the matter, however, for the waiters (who have been arranged in lines down the room, placing the dishes on table) retire to the lower end; the dark man in the blue coat and bright buttons, who has the direction of the music, looks up to the gallery, and calls out "band" in a very loud voice, out

bursts the orchestra, up rise the visitors, in march fourteen stewards, each with a long wand in his hand, like the evil genius in a pantomime; then the Chairman, then the titled visitors: they all make their way up the room, as fast as they can, bowing, and smiling, and smirking, and looking remarkably amiable. The applause ceases, grace is said, the clatter of plates and dishes begins; and every one appears highly gratified, either with the presence of the distinguished visitors, or the commencement of the anxiously-expected dinner.

As to the dinner itself— the mere dinner— it goes off, much the same every where. Tureens of soup are emptied with awful rapidity— waiters take plates of turbot away, to get lobster-sauce, and bring back plates of lobster-sauce without turbot; people who can carve poultry, are great fools if they own it, and people who can't, have no wish to learn.—The knives and forks form a pleasing accompaniment to Auber's music, and Auber's music would form a pleasing accompaniment to the dinner, if you could hear any thing besides the cymbals. The substantials disappear—moulds of jelly, vanish like lightning—hearty eaters

wipe their foreheads, and appear rather overcome with their recent exertions—people who have looked very cross hitherto, become remarkably bland, and ask you to take wine in the most friendly manner possible—old gentlemen direct your attention to the ladies' gallery, and take great pains to impress you with the fact that the charity is always peculiarly favoured in this respect—every one appears disposed to become talkative—and the hum of conversation is loud and general.

"Pray, silence, gentlemen, if you please, for *Non nobis*," shouts the toast-master with stentorian lungs—a toast-master's shirt-front, waistcoat, and neckerchief, by-the-by, always exhibit three distinct shades of cloudy-white.—"Pray, silence, gentlemen, for *Non nobis*." The singers, whom you discover to be no other than the very party that excited your curiosity at first, after "pitching" their voices immediately begin *too-too*ing most dismally, on which the regular old stagers burst into occasional cries of—"Sh—Sh—waiters!—Silence, waiters.—Stand still, waiters—keep back, waiters," and other exorcisms, delivered in a tone of indignant remonstrance. The grace is

soon concluded, and the company resume their seats. The uninitiated portion of the guests applaud *Non nobis* as vehemently as if it were a capital comic song, greatly to the scandal and indignation of the regular diners, who immediately attempt to quell this sacrilegious approbation, by cries of "Hush, hush!" whereupon the others, mistaking these sounds for hisses, applaud more tumultuously than before, and, by way of placing their approval beyond the possibility of doubt, shout "*Encore!*" most vociferously.

The moment the noise ceases, up starts the toast-master: — "Gentlemen, charge your glasses, if you please." Decanters having been handed about, and glasses filled, the toast-master proceeds, in a regular, ascending scale: —"Gentlemen—*air*—you—all charged? Pray —silence—gentlemen—for—the cha—i—r." The Chairman rises, and, after stating that he feels it quite unnecessary to preface the toast he is about to propose, with any observations whatever, wanders into a maze of sentences, and flounders about in the most extraordinary manner, presenting a lamentable spectacle of mystified humanity, until he arrives at the words,

"constitutional sovereign of these realms," at which elderly gentlemen exclaim, "Bravo!" and hammer the table tremendously with their knife-handles. "Under any circumstances, it would give him the greatest pride, it would give him the greatest pleasure—he might almost say, it would afford him satisfaction [cheers] to propose that toast. What must be his feelings, then, when he has the gratification of announcing, that he has received his Majesty's commands to apply to the Treasurer of his Majesty's Household, for his Majesty's annual donation of 25*l.* in aid of the funds of this charity." This announcement (which has been regularly made by every chairman, since the first foundation of the charity, forty-two years ago) calls forth the most vociferous applause; the toast is drunk with a great deal of cheering and knocking, and "God save the King" is sung by "the professional gentlemen;" the unprofessional gentlemen joining in the chorus, and giving the national anthem an effect which the newspapers, with great justice, describe as "perfectly electrical."

The other "loyal and patriotic" toasts having been drunk with all due enthusiasm, a comic

song having been sung by the man with the small neckerchief, and a sentimental one by the second of the party, we come to the most important toast of the evening—"Prosperity to the charity." Here again we are compelled to adopt newspaper phraseology, and to express our regret at being "precluded from giving even the substance of the noble Lord's observations." Suffice it to say, that the speech, which is somewhat of the longest, is rapturously received; and the toast having been drunk, the stewards (looking more important than ever) leave the room, and presently return, heading a procession of indigent orphans, boys and girls, who walk round the room, curtseying, and bowing, and treading on each other's heels, and looking very much as if they should like a glass of wine apiece, to the high gratification of the company generally, and especially of the lady Patronesses in the gallery. *Exeunt* children, and reenter stewards, each with a blue plate in his hand. The band plays a lively air; the majority of the company put their hands in their pockets, and look rather serious; and the noise of sovereigns, rattling on crockery, is heard from all parts of the room.

After a short interval, occupied in singing and toasting, the secretary puts on his spectacles, and proceeds to read the report and list of subscriptions, the latter being listened to with great attention. "Mr. Smith, one guinea—Mr. Tomkins, one guinea—Mr. Wilson, one guinea—Mr. Hickson one guinea—Mr. Nixon, one guinea—Mr. Charles Nixon, one guinea [hear, hear!]—Mr. James Nixon, one guinea—Mr. Thomas Nixon, one pound one [tremendous applause]. Lord Fitz Winkle, the chairman of the day, in addition to an annual donation of fifteen pounds—thirty guineas [prolonged knocking; several gentlemen knock the stems off their wine-glasses, in the vehemence of their approbation]. Lady Fitz Winkle, in addition to an annual donation of ten pound—twenty pound" [protracted knocking and shouts of "Bravo!"]. The list being at length concluded, the chairman rises and proposes the health of the secretary, than whom he knows no more zealous or estimable individual. The secretary, in returning thanks, observes that *he* knows no more excellent individual than the chairman — except the senior officer of the charity, whose health *he* begs to propose. The

senior officer, in returning thanks, observes, that *he* knows no more worthy man than the secretary —except Mr. Walker, the auditor, whose health *he* begs to propose. Mr. Walker, in returning thanks, discovers some other estimable individual, to whom alone the senior officer is inferior —and so they go on toasting and lauding and thanking, the only other toast of importance being "The Lady Patronesses now present," on which all the gentlemen turn their faces towards the ladies' gallery, shouting tremendously; and little priggish men, who have imbibed more wine than usual, kiss their hands and exhibit very distressing contortions of visage, supposed to be intended for ogling.

We have protracted our dinner to so great a length, that we have hardly time to add one word by way of grace. We can only entreat our readers not to imagine, because we have attempted to extract some amusement from a charity dinner, that we are at all disposed to under-rate either the excellence of the benevolent institutions with which London abounds, or the estimable motives of those who support them.

Astley's.

We never see any very large, staring, black Roman capitals, in a book or shop window, or placarded on a wall, without their immediately recalling to our mind an indistinct and confused recollection of the time when we were first initiated in the mysteries of the alphabet. We almost fancy we see the pin's point following the letter, to impress its form more strongly on our bewildered imagination; and wince involuntarily, as we remember the hard knuckles with which the reverend old lady, who instilled into our mind the first principles of education for ninepence per week, or ten and sixpence per quarter, was wont to poke our juvenile head occasionally, by way of adjusting the confusion of ideas in which we were generally involved. The same kind of feeling, pursues us in many

other instances, but there is no place which recals so strongly our recollections of childhood as Astley's. It was not a "Royal Amphitheatre" in those days, nor had Ducrow arisen to shed the light of classic taste and portable gas over the sawdust of the circus; but the whole character of the place was the same—the pieces were the same—the clown's jokes were the same—the riding-masters were equally grand —the comic performers equally witty—the tragedians equally hoarse — and the "highly-trained chargers" equally spirited. Astley's has altered for the better—we have changed for the worse. Our histrionic taste is gone; and with shame we confess, that we are far more delighted and amused with the audience, than with the pageantry we once so highly appreciated.

We like to watch a regular Astley's party in the Easter or Midsummer holidays—pa and ma, and nine or ten children, varying from five foot six to two foot eleven: from fourteen years of age to four. We had just taken our seat in one of the boxes, in the centre of the house, the other night, when the next was occupied by just such a party as we should have attempted to describe, had we depicted our *beau idéal* of a group of

Astley's visitors. First of all, there came three little boys and a little girl, who, in pursuance of pa's directions, issued in a very audible voice from the box-door, occupied the front row; then two more little girls were ushered in by a young lady, evidently the governess. Then came three more little boys, dressed like the first, in blue jackets and trousers, with lay-down shirt collars: then a child in a braided frock and high state of astonishment, with very large round eyes, opened to their utmost width, was lifted over the seats—a process which occasioned a considerable display of little pink legs—then came ma and pa, and then the eldest son, a boy of about fourteen years old, who was evidently trying to look as if he did not belong to the family. The first five minutes were occupied in taking the shawls off the little girls, and adjusting the bows which ornamented their hair; then it was providentially discovered that one of the little boys was seated behind a pillar and could not see, so the governess was stuck behind the pillar, and the boy lifted into her place. Then pa drilled the boys, and directed the stowing away of their pocket handkerchiefs; and ma having first nodded and winked

to the governess to pull the girls' frocks a little more off their shoulders, stood up to review the little troop—an inspection which appeared to terminate much to her own satisfaction, for she looked with a complacent air at pa, who was standing up at the further end of the seat. Pa returned the glance, and blew his nose very emphatically; and the poor governess peeped out from behind the pillar, and timidly tried to catch ma's eye, with a look expressive of her high admiration of the whole family. Then two of the little boys, who had been discussing the point whether Astley's was more than twice as large as Drury-lane, agreed to refer it to "George" for his decision; at which "George," who was no other than the young gentleman before noticed, waxed indignant, and remonstrated in no very gentle terms on the gross impropriety of having his name repeated in so loud a voice at a public place, on which all the children laughed very heartily, and one of the little boys wound up by expressing his opinion that "George began to think himself quite a man now," whereupon both pa and ma laughed too; and George (who carried a dress cane, and was cultivating whiskers) muttered that "Wil-

liam always was encouraged in his impertinence;" and assumed a look of profound contempt, which lasted the whole evening.

The play began, and the interest of the little boys knew no bounds. Pa was clearly interested too, although he very unsuccessfully endeavoured to look as if he wasn't. As for Ma, she was perfectly overcome by the drollery of the principle comedian, and laughed till every one of the immense bows on her ample cap trembled, at which the governess peeped out from behind the pillar again, and whenever she could catch Ma's eye, put her handkerchief to her mouth, and appeared, as in duty bound, to be in convulsions of laughter also. Then when the man in the splendid armour vowed to rescue the lady or perish in the attempt, the little boys applauded vehemently, especially one little fellow who was apparently on a visit to the family, and had been carrying on a child's flirtation, the whole evening, with a small coquette of twelve years old, who looked like a model of her mamma on a reduced scale; and who in common with the other little girls (who generally speaking have even more coquettishness about them than much older ones) looked very properly shocked,

when the knight's squire kissed the princess's confidential chambermaid.

When the scenes in the circle commenced, the children were more delighted than ever; and the wish to see what was going forward completely conquering Pa's dignity, he stood up in the box, and applauded as loudly as any of them. Between each feat of horsemanship, the governess leant across to Ma, and retailed the clever remarks of the children on that which had preceded: and Ma, in the openness of her heart, offered the governess an acidulated drop, and the governess, gratified to be taken notice of, retired behind her pillar again with a brighter countenance: and the whole party seemed quite happy, except the exquisite in the back of the box, who, being too grand to take an interest in the children, and too insignificant to be taken notice of by any body else, occupied himself, from time to time, in rubbing the place where the whiskers ought to be, and was completely alone in his glory.

We defy any one who has been to Astley's two or three times, and is consequently capable of appreciating the perseverance with which precisely the same jokes are repeated night after

night, and season after season, not to be amused with one part of the performances at least—we mean the scenes in the circle. For ourselves, we know that when the hoop, composed of jets of gas, is let down, the curtain drawn up, for the convenience of the half-price on their ejectment from the ring, the orange-peel cleared away, and the saw-dust shaken, with mathematical precision, into a complete circle, we feel as much enlivened as the youngest child present; and actually join in the laugh which follows the clown's shrill shout of "Here we are!" just for old acquaintance sake. We can't even quite divest ourself of our old feeling of reverence for the riding-master, who follows the clown with a long whip in his hand, and bows to the audience with graceful dignity. We don't mean any of your second-rate riding-masters in nankeen dressing-gowns, with brown frogs, but the regular gentleman—attendant on the principal riders, who always wears a military uniform with a table-cloth inside the breast of the coat, in which costume he forcibly reminds one of a fowl trussed for roasting. He is—but why should we attempt to describe that of which no description can convey an adequate idea? Every

body knows the man, and every body remembers his polished boots, his graceful demeanor, stiff, as some misjudging persons have in their jealousy considered it, and the splendid head of black hair, parted high on the forehead, to impart to the countenance an appearance of deep thought, and poetic melancholy. His soft and pleasing voice, too, is in perfect unison with his noble bearing, as he humours the clown by indulging in a little badinage; and the striking recollection of his own dignity, with which he exclaims, "Now, sir, if you please, inquire for Miss Woolford, sir," can never be forgotten. The graceful air, too, with which he introduces Miss Woolford into the arena, and after assisting her on to the saddle, follows her fairy courser round the circle, can never fail to create a deep impression in the bosom of every female servant present.

When Miss Woolford,—and the horse, and the orchestra, all stop together to take breath, he urbanely takes part in some such dialogue as the following (commenced by the clown): "I say, sir!"—"Well, sir," (it's always conducted in the politest manner.) "Did you ever happen to hear I was in the army, sir?"—"No, sir,"—

"Oh, yes, sir—I can go through my exercise, sir."—"Indeed, sir!"—"Shall I do it now, sir?" "If you please, sir; come, sir—make haste" (a cut with the long whip, and "Ha' done now—I don't like it," from the clown). Here the clown throws himself on the ground, and goes through a variety of gymnastic convulsions, doubling himself up, and untying himself again, and making himself look very like a man in the most hopeless extreme of human agony, to the vociferous delight of the gallery, until he is interrupted by a second cut from the long whip, and a request to see "what Miss Woolford's stopping for?" On which, to the inexpressible mirth of the gallery, he exclaims, "Now, Miss Woolford, what can I come for to go, for to fetch, for to bring, for to carry, for to do, for you, ma'am?" On the lady's announcing with a sweet smile that she wants the two flags, they are, with sundry grimaces, procured and handed up; the clown facetiously observing after the performance of the latter ceremony—"He, he, oh! I say, sir, Miss Woolford knows me; she smiled at me." Another cut from the whip—a burst from the orchestra—a start from the horse, and round goes Miss Woolford again on her

graceful performance, to the delight of every member of the audience, young or old. The next pause affords an opportunity for similar witticisms, the only additional fun being that of the clown making ludicrous grimaces at the riding-master every time his back is turned; and finally quitting the circle by jumping over his head, having previously directed his attention another way.

Did any of our readers ever notice the class of people, who hang about the stage doors of our minor theatres in the day-time? You will rarely pass one of these entrances without seeing a group of three or four men conversing on the pavement, with an indescribable public-house-parlour swagger, and a kind of conscious air, peculiar to people of this description. They always seem to think they are exhibiting; the lamps are ever before them. That young fellow in the faded brown coat, and very full light green trousers, pulls down the wristbands of his check shirt, as ostentatiously as if it were of the finest linen, and cocks the white hat of the summer-before-last as knowingly over his right eye, as if it were a purchase of yesterday. Look at the dirty white Berlin gloves, and the cheap

silk handkerchief stuck in the bosom of his seedy coat. Is it possible to see him for an instant, and not come to the conclusion that he is the walking gentleman who wears a blue surtout, clean collar, and white trousers, for half an hour, and then shrinks into his worn-out scanty clothes: who has to boast night after night of his splendid fortune, with the painful consciousness of a pound a-week and his boots to find; to talk of his father's mansion in the country, with a dreary recollection of his own two pair back, in the New Cut; and to be envied and flattered as the favoured lover of a rich heiress, remembering all the while that the ex-dancer at home, is in the family way, and out of an engagement? Next to him, perhaps, you will see a thin pale man, with a very long face, in a suit of shining black, thoughtfully knocking that part of his boot which once had a heel, with an ash stick. He is the man who does the heavy business, such as prosy fathers, virtuous servants, curates, landlords, and so forth. By-the-by, talking of fathers, we should very much like to see some piece in which all the dramatis personæ were orphans. Fathers are invariably great nuisances, on the stage, and always

have to give the hero or heroine a long explanation of what was done before the curtain rose, usually commencing with "It is now nineteen years, my dear child, since your blessed mother (here the old villain's voice falters) confided you to my charge. You were then an infant," &c. &c. Or else they have to discover, all of a sudden, that somebody, whom they have been in constant communication with during three long acts, without the slightest suspicion, is their own child, in which case they exclaim "Ah! What do I see! This bracelet! That smile! These documents! Those eyes! Can I believe my senses?—It must be!—Yes—it is—it is—my child!"—"My father!" exclaims the child; and then they fall into each other's arms, and look over each other's shoulders, and the audience give three distinct rounds of applause.

To return from this digression, we were about to say, that these are the sort of people whom you see talking, and attitudinizing, outside the stage-doors of our minor theatres. At Astley's they are always more numerous than at any other place. There is generally a groom or two, sitting on the window-sill, and two or three dirty shabby-genteel men in checked necker-

chiefs, and sallow linen, lounging about, and carrying, perhaps, under one arm, a pair of stage shoes badly wrapped up in a piece of old newspaper. Some years ago we used to stand looking, open-mouthed, at these men, with a feeling of mysterious curiosity, the very recollection of which provokes a smile at the moment we are writing. We could not believe, that the beings of light and elegance, in milk-white tunics, salmon-coloured legs, and blue scarfs, who flitted on sleek cream-coloured horses before our eyes at night, with all the aid of lights, music, and artificial flowers, could be the pale, dissipated-looking creatures we beheld by day.

We can hardly believe it now. Of the lower class of actors we have seen something, and it requires no great exercise of imagination to identify the walking gentleman with the "dirty swell," the comic singer with the public-house chairman, or the leading tragedian with drunkenness and distress, but the other men are mysterious beings, never seen out of the ring; never beheld but in the costume of gods and sylphs. With the exception of Ducrow, who can scarcely be classed among them, who ever knew a rider at Astley's, or saw him, but on

on horseback? Can our friend in the military uniform, ever appear in threadbare attire, or descend to the comparatively un-wadded costume of every-day life? Impossible! We cannot—we will not—believe it.

Greenwich Fair.

If the Parks be "the lungs of London," we wonder what Greenwich Fair is—a periodical breaking out, we suppose,—a sort of spring-rash—a three days' fever, which cools the blood for six months afterwards, and at the expiration of which, London is restored to its old habits of plodding industry, as suddenly and completely as if nothing had ever happened to disturb them. In our earlier days, we were a constant frequenter of Greenwich Fair, for years. We have proceeded to, and returned from it, in almost every description of vehicle. We cannot conscientiously deny the charge of having once made the passage in a spring van, accompanied by thirteen gentlemen, fourteen ladies, an unlimited number of children, and a barrel of beer; and we have a vague recollection of having in

later days, found ourself the eighth outside, on the top of a hackney-coach, at something past four o'clock in the morning, with a rather confused idea of our own name, or place of residence. We have grown older since then, and quiet and steady: liking nothing better than to spend our Easter, and all our other holidays, in some quiet nook, with people of whom we shall never tire; but we think we still remember something of Greenwich Fair, and those who resort to it. At all events we will try.

The road to Greenwich during the whole of Easter Monday, presents a scene of animated bustle, which cannot fail to amuse the most indifferent observer. Cabs, hackney-coaches, "shay" carts, coal-waggons, stages, omnibuses, sociables, gigs, donkey-chaises—all crammed with people (for the question never is, what the horse can draw, but what the vehicle will hold), roll along at their utmost speed—the dust flies in clouds—ginger-beer corks go off in volleys—the balcony of every public-house, is crowded with people, smoking and drinking—half the private houses are turned into tea-shops—fiddles are in great request—every little fruit-shop displays its stall of gilt gingerbread and

penny toys — turnpike-men are in despair — horses won't go on, and wheels will come off— ladies in "carawans" scream with fright at every fresh concussion, and their admirers find it necessary to sit remarkably close to them, by way of encouragement—servants of all-work, who are not allowed to have followers, and have got a holiday for the day, make the most of their time with the faithful admirer who waits for a stolen interview at the corner of the street every night, when they go to fetch the beer— apprentices grow sentimental, and straw-bonnet makers kind; every body is anxious to get on, and actuated by the common wish to be at the fair, or in the park, as soon as possible. Pedestrians linger in groups at the road-side, unable to resist the allurements of the stout proprietress of the "Jack-in-the-box—three shies a penny," or the more splendid offers of the man with three thimbles and a pea on a little round board, who astonishes the bewildered crowd with some such address as, "Here's the sort o'game to make you laugh seven years arter you're dead, and turn ev'ry air on your ed grey vith delight! Three thimbles and vun little pea—with a vun, two, three, and a two, three

vun; catch him who can, look on, keep your eyes open, and niver say die! niver mind the change, and damn the expense: all fair and above board: them as don't play can't vin, and luck attend the ryal sportsman! Bet any gen'lm'n any sum of money, from arf-a-crown up to a suverin, as he doesn't name the thimble as kivers the pea!" Here some greenhorn whispers his friend, that he distinctly saw the pea roll under the middle thimble—an impression which is immediately confirmed by a gentleman in top-boots, who is standing by, and who, in a low tone, regrets his own inability to bet in consequence of having unfortunately left his purse at home, but strongly urges the stranger not to neglect such a golden opportunity. The "plant" is successful, the bet is made, the stranger of course loses: and the gentleman with the thimbles consoles him, as he pockets the money, with an assurance that its "all the fortin of var! this time I vin, next time you vin: niver mind the loss of two bob and a bender! Do it up in a small parcel, and break out in a fresh place! Here's the sort o' game," &c.—and the eloquent harangue, with such variations as the speaker's exuberant fancy

suggests, is again repeated to the gaping crowd, reinforced by the accession of several new comers.

The chief place of resort in the day-time, after the public-houses, is the park, in which the principal amusement is to drag young ladies up the steep hill which leads to the observatory, and then drag them down again, at the very top of their speed, greatly to the derangement of their curls and bonnet-caps, and much to the edification of lookers-on from below. "Kiss in the Ring," and "Threading my Grandmother's Needle," too, are sports which receive their full share of patronage. Love-sick swains, under the influence of gin-and-water, and the tender passion, become violently affectionate: and the fair objects of their regard, enhance the value of stolen kisses, by a vast deal of struggling, and holding down of heads, and cries of "Oh! Ha' done, then, George—Oh, do tickle him for me, Mary—Well, I never!" and similar Lucretian ejaculations. Little old men and women, with a small basket under one arm, and a wine-glass, without a foot, in the other hand, tender "a drop o' the right sort" to the dif-

ferent groups; and young ladies, who are persuaded to indulge in a drop of the aforesaid right sort, display a pleasing degree of reluctance to taste it, and cough afterwards with great propriety.

The old pensioners, who, for the moderate charge of a penny, exhibit the mast-house, the Thames, and shipping, the place where the men used to hang in chains, and other interesting sights, through a telescope, are asked questions about objects within the range of the glass, which it would puzzle a Solomon to answer; and requested to find out particular houses in particular streets, which it would have been a task of some difficulty for Mr. Horner (not the young gentleman who eat mince pies with his thumb, but the man of Colosseum notoriety) to discover. Here and there, where some three or four couple are sitting on the grass together, you will see a sun-burnt woman in a red cloak "telling fortunes" and prophesying husbands, which it requires no extraordinary observation to describe, for the originals are before her. Thereupon, the lady concerned, laughs and blushes, and ultimately buries her face in an imitation-cambric handkerchief, and the gentleman de-

scribed, looks extremely foolish, and squeezes her hand, and fees the gipsy liberally; and the gipsy goes away, perfectly satisfied herself, and leaving those behind her perfectly satisfied also: and the prophecy, like many other prophecies of greater importance, fulfils itself in time.

But it grows dark: the crowd has gradually dispersed, and only a few stragglers are left behind. The light in the direction of the church, shows that the fair is illuminated; and the distant noise proves it to be filling fast. The spot which half an hour ago, was ringing with the shouts of boisterous mirth, is as calm and quiet as if nothing could ever disturb its serenity; the fine old trees, the majestic building at your feet, with the noble river beyond, glistening in the moonlight, appear before you in all their beauty, and under the most favourable aspect; the voices of the asylum boys, singing their evening hymn, are borne faintly to your ear; and you feel something like pride on reflecting, as you bend your steps towards the park-gate, that you belong to the country which has selected such a spot as a retreat for its oldest and best defenders in the decline of their lives.

Five minutes walking brings you to the fair; a scene calculated to awaken very different feelings from those inspired by the place you have just left. The entrance is occupied on either side by the vendors of gingerbread and toys: the stalls are gaily lighted up, the most attractive goods profusely disposed, and unbonneted young ladies, in their zeal for the interest of their employers, seize you by the coat, and use all the blandishments of "Do dear"– "There's a love"—"Don't be cross, now," &c., to induce you to purchase half a pound of the real spice nuts, of which the majority of the regular fair-goers carry a pound or two as a present supply, tied up in a cotton pocket-handkerchief. Occasionally, you pass a deal table, on which are exposed pen'orths of pickled salmon (fennel included), in little white saucers, oysters, with shells as large as cheese-plates, and divers specimens of a species of snail (*wilks*, we think they are called) floating in a somewhat bilious-looking green liquid. Cigars, too, are in great demand; gentlemen must smoke, of course, and here they are, two a penny, in a regular authentic cigar box, with a lighted tallow candle in the centre.

Imagine yourself in an extremely dense crowd, which swings you to and fro, and in and out, and every way but the right one; add to this the screams of women, the shouts of boys, the clanging of gongs, the firing of pistols, the ringing of bells, the bellowings of speaking-trumpets, the squeaking of penny dittos, the noise of a dozen bands, with three drums in each, all playing different tunes at the same time, the hallooing of showmen, and an occasional roar from the wild beast shows; and you are in the very centre and heart of the fair. This immense booth, with the large stage in front, so brightly illuminated with variegated lamps and pots of burning fat, is "Richardson's," where you have a melo-drama (with three murders and a ghost), a pantomime, a comic song, an overture, and some incidental music, all done in five-and-twenty minutes.

The company are now promenading outside in all the dignity of wigs, spangles, red-ochre, and whitening. See with what a ferocious air the gentleman who personates the Mexican chief, paces up and down, and with what an eye of calm dignity the principal tragedian gazes on the crowd below, or converses confidentially with the harlequin. The four

clowns, who are engaged in a mock broad-sword combat, may be all very well for the low-minded holiday makers; but these are the people for the reflective portion of the community. They look so noble in those Roman dresses, with their yellow legs and arms, long black curly heads, bushy eyebrows, and scowl expressive of assassination, and vengeance, and every thing else that is grand and solemn. Then, the ladies—were there ever such innocent and awful-looking beings; as they walk up and down the platforms in twos and threes, with their arms round each other's waists, or leaning for support on one of those majestic men! Their spangled muslin dresses and blue satin shoes and sandals (a *leetle* the worse for wear) are the admiration of all beholders; and the playful manner in which they check the advances of the clown is perfectly enchanting.

"Just a-going to begin! Pray come for'erd, come for'erd," exclaims the man in the countryman's dress, for the seventieth time, and people force their way up the steps in crowds. The band suddenly strikes up, the harlequin and columbine set the example, reels are formed in less than no time, the Roman heroes

place their arms a-kimbo, and dance with considerable agility; and the leading tragic actress, and the gentleman who enacts the "swell" in the pantomime, foot it to perfection. "All in to begin," shouts the manager, when no more people can be induced to "come for'erd," and away rush the leading members of the company to do the dreadful in the first piece.

A change of performance takes place every day during the fair, but the story of the tragedy is always pretty much the same. There's a rightful heir, who loves a young lady, and is beloved by her; and a wrongful heir, who loves her too, and isn't loved by her; and the wrongful heir gets hold of the rightful heir, and throws him into a dungeon, just to kill him off when convenient, for which purpose he hires a couple of assassins—a good one and a bad one—who, the moment they are left alone, get up a little murder on their own account, the good one killing the bad one, and the bad one wounding the good one. Then the rightful heir is discovered in prison, carefully holding a long chain in his hands, and seated despondingly in a large arm-chair; and the young lady comes in to two bars of soft music, and embraces the

rightful heir; and then the wrongful heir comes in to two bars of quick music, and goes on in the most shocking manner, throwing the young lady about, as if she was nobody, and calling the rightful heir "Ar-recreant—ar-wretch!" in a very loud voice, which answers the double purpose of displaying his passion, and preventing the sound being deadened by the sawdust. The interest becomes intense; the wrongful heir draws his sword, and rushes on the rightful heir; a blue smoke is seen, a gong is heard, and a tall white figure (who has been all this time, behind the arm-chair, covered over with a table-cloth), slowly rises to the tune of "Oft in the stilly night." This is no other than the ghost of the rightful heir's father, who was killed by the wrongful heir's father, at sight of which the wrongful heir becomes apoplectic, and is literally "struck all of a heap," the stage not being large enough to admit of his falling down at full length. Then the good assassin staggers in, and says he was hired in conjunction with the bad assassin, by the wrongful heir, to kill the rightful heir; and he's killed a good many people in his time, but he's very sorry for it, and won't do so any more—a promise

which he immediately redeems, by dying off hand, without any nonsense about it. Then the rightful heir throws down his chain; and then two men, a sailor, and a young woman (the tenantry of the rightful heir) come in, and the ghost makes dumb motions to them, which they, by supernatural interference, understand —for no one else can; and the ghost (who can't do any thing without blue fire) blesses the rightful heir and the young lady, by half suffocating them with smoke: and then a muffin-bell rings, and the curtain drops.

The exhibitions next in popularity to these itinerant theatres, are the travelling menageries, or, to speak more intelligibly, the "Wild-beast shows," where a military band in beef-eater's costume, with leopard-skin caps, play incessantly; and where large highly-coloured representations of tigers tearing men's heads open, and a lion being burnt with red-hot irons to induce him to drop his victim, are hung up outside, by way of attracting visitors,

The principal officer at these places, is generally a very tall, hoarse man, in a scarlet coat, with a cane in his hand, with which he occasionally raps the pictures we have just noticed, by

way of illustrating his description—something in this way. "Here, here, here; the lion, the lion (tap), exactly as he is represented on the canvass outside (three taps): no waiting, remember; no deception. The fe-ro-cious lion (tap, tap) who bit off the gentleman's head last Cambervel vos a twelvemonth, and has killed on the awerage three keepers a-year ever since he arrived at matoority. No extra charge on this account recollect; the price of admission is only sixpence." This address never fails to produce a considerable sensation, and sixpences flow into the treasury with wonderful rapidity.

The dwarfs are also objects of great curiosity, and as a dwarf, a giantess, a living skeleton, a wild Indian, a "young lady of singular beauty, with perfectly white hair and pink eyes," and two or three other natural curiosities, are usually exhibited together for the small charge of a penny, they attract very numerous audiences. The best thing about a dwarf is, that he has always a little box, about two feet six inches high, into which, by long practice, he can just manage to get, by doubling himself up like a boot-jack; this box is painted outside like a six-roomed house, and as the crowd see him

ring a bell, or fire a pistol out of the first-floor window, they verily believe that it is his ordinary town residence, divided like other mansions into drawing-rooms, dining-parlour, and bed-chambers. Shut up in this case, the unfortunate little object is brought out to delight the throng by holding a facetious dialogue with the proprietor, in the course of which, the dwarf (who is always particularly drunk) pledges himself to sing a comic song inside; and pays various compliments to the ladies, which induce them to "come for'erd" with great alacrity. As a giant is not so easily moved, a pair of indescribables of most capacious dimensions, and a huge shoe, are usually brought out, into which two or three stout men get all at once, to the enthusiastic delight of the crowd, who are quite satisfied with the solemn assurance that these habiliments form part of the giant's every-day costume.

The grandest and most numerously-frequented booth in the whole fair, however, is "The Crown and Anchor"—a temporary ball-room we forget how many hundred feet long, the price of admission to which, is one shilling. Immediately on your right hand as you enter,

London. John Macrone 1836

after paying your money, is a refreshment place, at which cold beef, roast and boiled—French rolls, stout, wine, tongue, ham, even fowls, if we recollect right, are displayed in tempting array. There is a raised orchestra, and the place is boarded all the way down, in patches, just wide enough for a country dance. There is no master of the ceremonies in this artificial Eden—all is primitive, unreserved, and unstudied. The dust is blinding, the heat insupportable, the company somewhat noisy, and in the highest spirits possible: the ladies in the height of their innocent animation, dancing in the gentlemen's hats, and the gentlemen promenading "the gay and festive scene" in the ladies' bonnets, or with the more expensive ornaments of false noses, and low-crowned, tinder-box looking hats, playing children's drums, and accompanied by ladies on the penny trumpet. The noise of these various instruments, the orchestra, the shouting, the "scratchers," and the dancing, is perfectly bewildering. The dancing, itself, beggars description—every figure lasts about an hour, and the ladies bounce about with a degree of spirit which is quite indescribable. As to the gentlemen, they stamp

their feet against the ground, every time, "hands four round" begins, go down the middle and up again, with cigars in their mouths, and silk handkerchiefs in their hands, and whirl their partners round, nothing loth, scrambling and falling, and embracing, and knocking up against the other couples, until they are fairly tired out, and can move no longer. The same scene is repeated again and again (slightly varied by an occasional "row") until a late hour at night: and a great many clerks and 'prentices find themselves next morning with aching heads, empty pockets, damaged hats, and a very imperfect recollection of how it was, they did *not* get home.

The Beadle's Tale.

We were passing the corner of Bow-street, on our return from a lounging excursion the other afternoon, when a crowd, assembled round the door of the Police Office, attracted our attention, and we turned up the street accordingly. There were thirty or forty people standing on the pavement, and half across the road, and a few stragglers were patiently stationed on the opposite side of the way—all evidently waiting in expectation of some arrival. We waited too, a few minutes, but nothing occurred: so we turned round to an unshaved sallow-looking cobbler who was standing next us, with his hands under the bib of his apron, and put the usual question of "What's the matter?" The cobbler eyed us from head to foot, with superlative contempt, and laconically replied,

"Nuffin." Now we were perfectly aware that if two men stop in the street to look at any given object, or even to gaze in the air, two hundred men will be assembled in no time; but as we knew very well, that no crowd of people could by possibility remain in a street for five minutes, without getting up a little amusement among themselves, unless they had some absorbing object in view, the natural inquiry next in order was, "What are all these people waiting here for?"—"His Majesty's carriage," replied the cobbler. This was still more extraordinary. We could not imagine what earthly business his Majesty's carriage could have at the Public Office, Bow-street: and we were beginning to ruminate upon the possibility of the Duke of Cumberland being brought up on a warrant for assaulting the Princess Victoria, when a general exclamation from all the boys in the crowd, of "Here's the wan!" caused us to raise our head and look up the street.

The covered vehicle, in which prisoners are conveyed from the police offices to the different prisons, was coming along at full speed, and it then occurred to us, for the first time, that his Majesty's carriage was merely another name for

the Prisoners' van, conferred upon it, not only by reason of the superior gentility of the term, but because the aforesaid van is maintained at his Majesty's expense, having been originally started for the exclusive accommodation of ladies and gentlemen under the necessity of visiting the various houses-of-call, known by the general denomination of "his Majesty's Gaols."

The van drew up at the office-door, and the people thronged round the steps, just leaving a little alley for the prisoners to pass through.

Our friend the cobbler and the other stragglers crossed over, and we followed their example. The driver, and another man who had been seated by his side in front of the vehicle, dismounted, and were admitted into the office. The office-door was closed after them, and the crowd were on the tiptoe of expectation.

After a few minutes delay, the door again opened, and the two first prisoners appeared. They were a couple of girls, of whom the elder could not be more than sixteen, and the younger of whom had certainly not attained her fourteenth year. That they were sisters was evident from the resemblance which still subsisted between them, though two additional years of

depravity, had fixed their brand upon the elder girl's features, as legibly as if a red-hot iron had seared them. They were both gaudily dressed, the younger one especially, and although there was a strong similarity between them in both respects, which was rendered the more obvious by their being handcuffed together, it is impossible to conceive a greater contrast than the demeanour of the two presented. The younger girl was weeping bitterly—not for display, or in the hope of producing effect, but for very shame; her face was buried in her handkerchief, and her whole manner was but too expressive of bitter and unavailing sorrow.

"How long are you for, Emily?" screamed a red-faced woman in the crowd. "Six weeks, and labour;" replied the elder girl with a flaunting laugh; "and that's better than the stone jug any how; the mill's a d——d sight better than the Sessions; and here's Bella a-going too, for the first time. Hold up your head, you chicken," she continued, boisterously tearing the other girl's handkerchief away; "Hold up your head, and show 'em your face, I an't jealous, but I'm blessed if I an't game."—"That's right, old girl,"

exclaimed a man in a paper cap, who, in common with the greater part of the crowd, had been inexpressibly delighted with this little incident.—"Right!" replied the girl; "ah, to be sure; what's the odds so long as you're happy." —"Come, in with you," interrupted the driver. —"Don't you be in a hurry, coachman," replied the girl; "and recollect I want to be set down in Cold-Bath Fields—large House with a high garden wall in front; you can't mistake it. Hallo, Belle, where are you going to—you'll pull my precious arm off?" This was addressed to the younger girl, who, in her anxiety to hide herself in the caravan, had ascended the steps first, and forgotten the strain upon the handcuff; "Come down, and let's show you the way." And after jerking the miserable girl down, with a force which made her stagger on the pavement, she got into the vehicle, and was followed by her wretched companion.

These two girls had been thrown upon London streets, their vices and debauchery, by a sordid and rapacious mother. What the younger girl was then, the elder had been once;

and what the elder then was, she must soon become. A melancholy prospect, but how surely to be realized: a tragic drama, but how often acted! Turn to the prisons and police-offices of London — nay, look into the very streets themselves. These things pass before our eyes, day after day, and hour after hour — they have become such matters of course, that they are utterly disregarded. The progress of these girls in crime, will be as rapid as the flight of a pestilence: resembling it, too, in its baneful influence and wide-spreading infection. Step by step how many wretched females, within the sphere of every man's observation, have become involved in a career of vice frightful to contemplate; hopeless at its commencement, loathsome and repulsive in its course, friendless, forlorn, and unpitied, at its miserable conclusion!

There were other prisoners—boys of ten, as hardened in vice as men of fifty – a houseless vagrant going joyfully to prison as to a place of food and shelter, handcuffed to a man whose prospects were ruined, character lost, and family rendered destitute by his first offence.—Our curiosity, however, was satisfied. The first

group had left an impression on our mind we would gladly have avoided, and would willingly have effaced.

The crowd dispersed—the vehicle rolled away with its load of guilt and misfortune; and we saw no more of the Prisoners' Van.

A Christmas Dinner.

Christmas time! That man must be a misanthrope indeed, in whose breast something like a jovial feeling is not roused—in whose mind some pleasant associations are not awakened—by the recurrence of Christmas. There are people who will tell you that Christmas is not to them what it used to be—that each succeeding Christmas has found some cherished hope, or happy prospect, of the year before, dimmed o passed away, and that the present only serves to remind them of reduced circumstances and straitened incomes—of the feasts they once bestowed on hollow friends, and of the cold looks that meet them now, in adversity and misfortune. Never heed such dismal reminiscences. There are few men who have lived long enough in the world, who cannot call up such thoughts

any day in the year. Then do not select the merriest of the three hundred and sixty-five, for your doleful recollections, but draw your chair nearer the blazing fire—fill the glass and send round the song- and, if your room be smaller than it was a dozen years ago, or if your glass be filled with reeking punch, instead of sparkling wine, put a good face on the matter, and empty it off-hand, and fill another, and troll off the old ditty you used to sing, and thank God it's no worse. Look on the merry faces of your children as they sit round the fire. One little seat may be empty—one slight form that gladdened the father's heart, and roused the mother's pride to look upon, may not be there. Dwell not upon the past—think not that one short year ago, the fair child now resolving into dust, sat before you, with the bloom of health upon its cheek, and the gay unconsciousness of infancy in its joyous eye. Reflect upon your present blessings—of which every man has many—not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. Fill your glass again, with a merry face and contented heart. Our life on it, but your Christmas shall be merry, and your new year a happy one.

Who can be insensible to the outpourings of good feeling, and the honest interchange of affectionate attachment, which abound at this season of the year? A Christmas family party! We know nothing in nature more delightful! There seems a magic in the very name of Christmas. Petty jealousies and discords are forgotten: social feelings are awakened in bosoms to which they have long been strangers; father and son, or brother and sister, who have met and passed with averted gaze, or a look of cold recognition, for months before, proffer and return the cordial embrace, and bury their past animosities in their present happiness. Kindly hearts that have yearned towards each other, but have been withheld by false notions of pride and self-dignity, are again united, and all is kindness and benevolence! Would that Christmas lasted the whole year through, and that the prejudices and passions which deform our better nature, were never called into action among those to whom, at least, they should ever be strangers.

The Christmas family party that we mean, is not a mere assemblage of relations, got up at a week or two's notice, originating this year, having

no family precedent in the last, and not likely to be repeated in the next. It is an annual gathering of all the accessible members of the family, young or old, rich or poor; and all the children look forward to it, for some two months beforehand, in a fever of anticipation. Formerly it was held at grandpapa's; but grandpapa getting old, and grandmamma getting old too, and rather infirm, they have given up housekeeping, and domesticated themselves with uncle George: so the party always takes place at uncle George's house, but grandmamma sends in most of the good things, and grandpapa always *will* toddle down, all the way to Newgate-market, to buy the turkey, which he engages a porter to bring home behind him in triumph, always insisting on the man's being rewarded with a glass of spirits, over and above his hire, to drink "a merry Christmas and a happy new year" to aunt George. As to grandmamma she is very secret and mysterious for two or three days beforehand, but not sufficiently so, to prevent rumours getting afloat that she has purchased a beautiful new cap with pink ribbons for each of the servants, together with sundry books, and penknives, and pencil-

cases for the younger branches; to say nothing of divers secret additions to the order originally given by aunt George at the pastrycook's, such as another dozen of mince pies for the dinner, and a large plumb-cake for the children.

On Christmas-eve, grandmamma is always in excellent spirits, and after employing all the children, during the day, in stoning the plums, and all that, insists regularly every year on uncle George coming down into the kitchen, taking off his coat, and stirring the pudding for half an hour or so, which uncle George good-humouredly does, to the vociferous delight of the children and servants; and the evening concludes with a glorious game of blind man's buff, in an early stage of which grandpapa takes great care to be caught, in order that he may have an opportunity of displaying his dexterity.

On the following morning, the old couple, with as many of the children as the pew will hold, go to church in great state, leaving aunt George at home dusting decanters and filling castors, and uncle George carrying bottles into the dining-parlour, and calling for corkscrews, and getting into every body's way.

When the church-party return to lunch,

grandpapa produces a small sprig of misletoe from his pocket, and tempts the boys to kiss their little cousins under it—a proceeding which affords both the boys and the old gentleman unlimited satisfaction, but which rather outrages grandmamma's ideas of decorum, until grandpapa says, that when he was just thirteen years and three months old, *he* kissed grandmamma under a misletoe too, on which the children clap their hands, and laugh very heartily, as do aunt George and uncle George; and grandmamma looks pleased, and says, with a benevolent smile, that grandpapa always was an impudent dog, on which the children laugh very heartily again, and grandpapa more heartily than any of them.

But all these diversions are nothing to the subsequent excitement, when grandmamma in a high cap, and slate-coloured silk gown: and grandpapa with a beautifully plaited shirt frill, and white neckerchief, seat themselves on one side of the drawing-room fire, with uncle George's children and little cousins innumerable, seated in the front, waiting the arrival of the anxiously expected visitors. Suddenly a hackney-coach

is heard to stop, and uncle George, who has been looking out of the window, exclaims "Here's Jane!" on which the children rush to the door, and scamper helter-skelter down stairs; and uncle Robert and aunt Jane, and the dear little baby, and the nurse, and the whole party, are ushered up stairs amidst tumultuous shouts of "Oh, my!" from the children, and frequently-repeated warnings not to hurt baby from the nurse; and grandpapa takes the child, and grandmamma kisses her daughter, and the confusion of this first entry has scarcely subsided, when some other aunts and uncles with more cousins arrive, and the grown-up cousins flirt with each other, and so do the little cousins too, for that matter, and nothing is to be heard but a confused din of talking, laughing, and merriment.

A hesitating double knock at the street-door, heard during a momentary pause in the conversation, excites a general inquiry of "Who's that?"; and two or three children, who have been standing at the window, announce in a low voice, that it's "poor aunt Margaret." Upon which aunt George leaves the room to

welcome the new comer, and grandmamma draws herself up rather stiff and stately, for Margaret married a poor man without her consent, and poverty not being a sufficiently weighty punishment for her offence, has been discarded by her friends, and debarred the society of her dearest relatives. But Christmas has come round, and the unkind feelings that have struggled against better dispositions during the year, have melted away before its genial influence, like half-formed ice beneath the morning sun. It is not difficult in a moment of angry feeling for a parent to denounce a disobedient child; but to banish her at a period of general good-will and hilarity, from the hearth round which she has sat on so many anniversaries of the same day, expanding by slow degrees from infancy to girlhood, and then bursting, almost imperceptibly, into the high spirited and beautiful woman, is widely different. The air of conscious rectitude, and cold forgiveness, which the old lady has assumed, sits ill upon her; and when the poor girl is led in by her sister—pale in looks and broken in spirit—not from poverty, for that she could bear, but from the

consciousness of undeserved neglect, and unmerited unkindness—it is easy to see how much of it is assumed. A momentary pause succeeds; the girl breaks suddenly from her sister, and throws herself, sobbing, on her mother's neck. The father steps hastily forward, and grasps her husband's hand. Friends crowd round to offer their hearty congratulations, and happiness and harmony again prevail.

As to the dinner, it's perfectly delightful—nothing goes wrong, and every body is in the very best of spirits, and disposed to please and be pleased. Grandpapa relates a circumstantial account of the purchase of the turkey, with a slight digression relative to the purchase of previous turkeys, on former Christmas-days, which grandmamma corroborates in the minutest particular. Uncle George tells stories, and carves poultry, and takes wine, and jokes with the children at the side-table, and winks at the cousins that are making love, or being made love to, and exhilarates everybody with his good humour and hospitality; and when at last a stout servant, staggers in with a gigantic pudding with a sprig of holly in the top, there

is such a laughing, and shouting, and clapping of little chubby hands, and kicking up of fat dumpy legs, as can only be equalled by the applause with which the astonishing feat of pouring lighted brandy into mince pies, is received by the younger visitors. Then the dessert!—and the wine!—and the fun! Such beautiful speeches, and *such* songs, from Aunt Margaret's husband, who turns out to be such a nice man, and *so* attentive to grandmamma! Even grandpapa not only sings his annual song with unprecedented vigour, but on being honoured with an unanimous *encore*, according to annual custom, actually comes out with a new one, which nobody but grandmamma ever heard before: and a young scapegrace of a cousin, who has been in some disgrace with the old people, for certain heinous sins of omission, and commission—neglecting to call, and persisting in drinking Burton ale—astonishes every body into convulsions of laughter by volunteering the most extraordinary comic songs that were ever heard. And thus the evening passes, in a strain of rational good-will and cheerfulness, doing more to awaken the sympathies of

every member of the party in behalf of his neighbour, and to perpetuate their good feeling during the ensuing year, than all the homilies that have ever been written, by all the Divines that have ever lived.

END OF VOL. I.

THOMAS CURSON HANSARD, PATERNOSTER-ROW.